

Commentary

Volume Sixty-nine, Number Three, March 1980

Reading About Jews

Ruth R. Wisse

France's New Right

Roger Kaplan

The Mysterious Messenger & the Final Solution

Walter Laqueur

Judy Blume's Children

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MOVIES

The 60's in Soft Focus

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THEATER

Three from London

Jack Richardson

BOOKS

Walter Berns
Robert Alter
Jonathan D. Sarna
Arch Puddington
James A. Nuechterlein

The diamond solitaire.



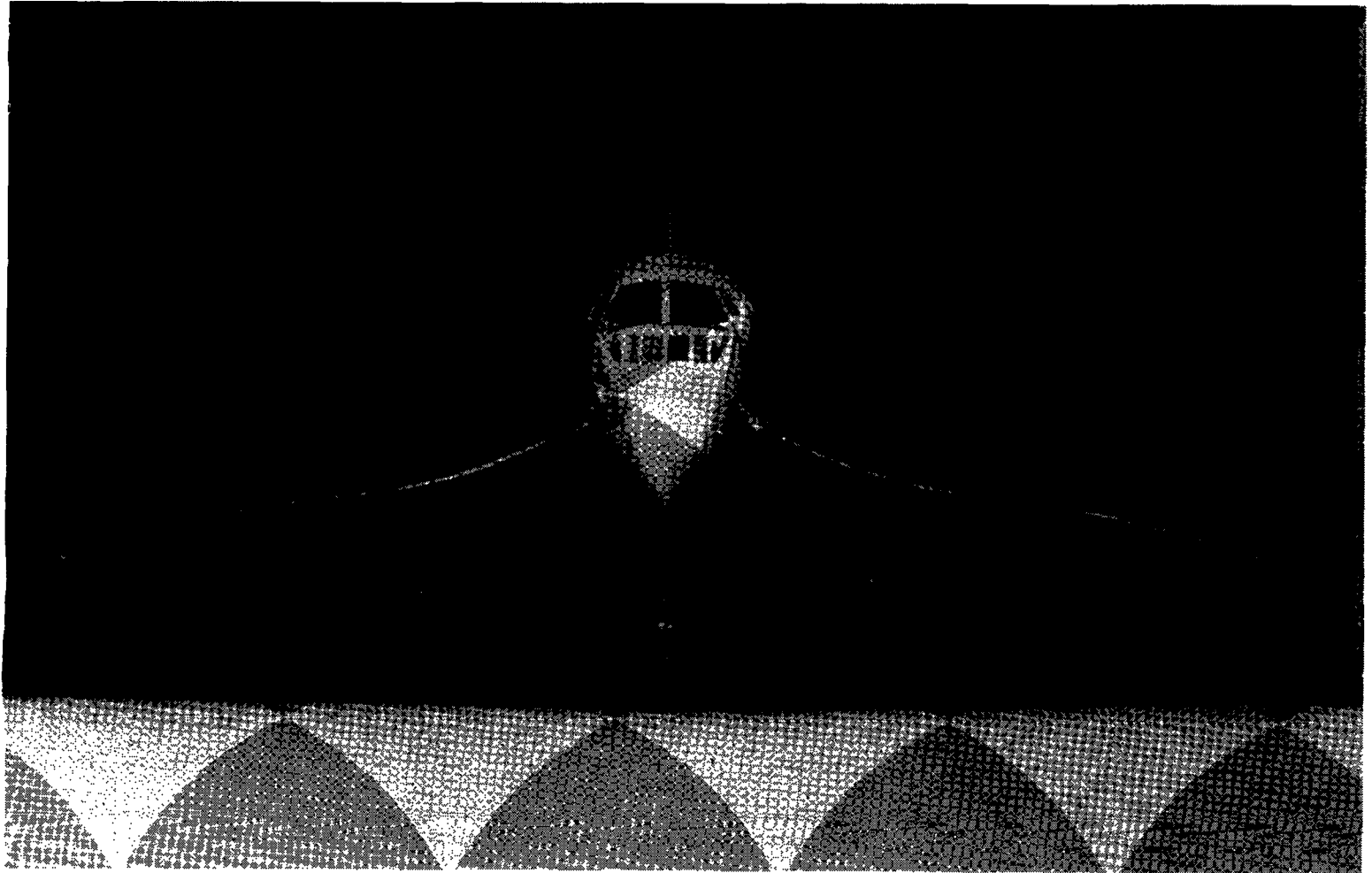
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Commentary

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Letters from Readers

Kennedy's Record

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his article, "Kennedy's Foreign Policy: What the Record Shows" [December 1979], Joshua Muravchik evaluates Senator Kennedy not just from the record, but from his own sense of values. It is worth looking at what Mr. Muravchik, based on his value system, deems to be Kennedy's main shortcomings.

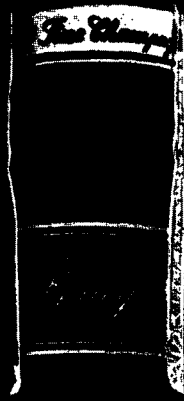
1. Kennedy is faulted most of all for feeling that "the Soviet Union has a vested interest in a web of arms-control agreements." Nixon thought this and so did Ford and Kissinger, else why a SALT process at all? But if Kennedy is wrong and the Soviet Union is testing the "outer perimeters" of the agreements, what does this imply? I take it that Mr. Muravchik's essential point is that the Russians can't be trusted and there should be no agreements. If it is not, then Mr. Muravchik is saying nothing other than that agreements should be verifiable, and I don't know of any responsible person, including Kennedy, who argues against this.

2. Kennedy is berated for wanting to limit U.S. security "commitments" abroad to Europe, Japan, and Israel. Mr. Muravchik is careful to use the word commitment each time he cites this shortcoming in Kennedy's policy. What other "commitments" would Mr. Muravchik wish the United States to undertake? To Mexico or Canada, where obviously we would intervene even without a commitment if a hostile third power intervened? In Africa or Southeast Asia? Or perhaps in Iran? Again, because of the narrow terms in which the criticism is made, and the failure to spell out how narrow indeed the criticism is, I do not know what Mr. Muravchik is saying. If he wants more commitments, let him so state and state where. . . .

3. Kennedy is criticized for arguing that the United States should avoid trying to manipulate the process of change in a complex world. Mr. Muravchik seems to be saying that since others are engaged in precisely such manipulation, the United States must do the same. I wonder how many Americans share Mr. Muravchik's sense of values on U.S. interventionism.

4. Kennedy is accused of wanting to increase aid through multi-lateral channels (such as the World Bank) and this is depicted as increasing the transfer of American "wealth" to others (to poor countries) without being able to exercise any influence on the aid (he calls it charity) recipients. We now transfer about one-quarter of 1 per cent of our annual income (not wealth), as measured by the ratio of official development assistance to gross national product, one of the lowest ratios of the industrial democratic countries. Is Mr. Muravchik arguing that increasing our aid to levels reached by Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, even France or Great Britain, would impoverish us? It might then reach seven-tenths of 1 per cent of our annual GNP. What value sense does Mr. Muravchik have that argues against a cooperative world effort to do what can be done to lower the level of world poverty? Perhaps aid does not work; perhaps its level should not be increased; but to make a big fuss about its level on impoverishment grounds, and then hold as reprehensible the fact that the effort is made cooperatively with other donors, tells me enough about Mr. Muravchik's values to know that I don't want his candidate to become President.

5. Finally, Kennedy is chastised for being critical of South Korea's human-rights record under President Park and not being critical enough about Castro's human-rights record. Fair enough in its way, but what is it that Mr. Muravchik wants, statements for the record or some improvement in the treatment of human beings? We have some leverage over those who receive our aid. What leverage would Mr. Muravchik exert against Cuba? I do not quarrel with the thesis that our criticism should be evenhanded, but if results are what is desired, our action must be differentiated by the extent of our control over the situation. I do not wish to get into the argument here as to whether our criticism of the Shah (or Somoza) on human-rights grounds led to his downfall or whether our failure to criticize him earlier led to the way the downfall occurred. This is an arguable issue, but Mr. Muravchik seems only to argue that we must



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criticize our enemies, no matter with what results, and refrain from criticizing our "friends."

SIDNEY WEINTRAUB
Lyndon B. Johnson School
of Public Affairs
University of Texas
Austin, Texas

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK writes:

Sidney Weintraub complains that the portion of my article where I offer some evaluation of Senator Kennedy's record is based on my own values. Mr. Weintraub would no doubt have preferred it if I had used his values as a referent, but I prefer mine.

1. The point about arms-control agreements with the Soviets is that Kennedy's views are naive. Oddly, Mr. Weintraub repeats half of a quotation which I gave while omitting the other half, which was the more important part. After the words about the Soviet Union's "vested interest" in arms-control agreements came this sentence: "They know that this carefully balanced creation would fall to pieces at the first sign of a treaty violation." In February 1978, the State Department issued a detailed response to charges that the Soviets were violating SALT I. In it, the Department acknowledged numerous instances in which the Soviets had violated the spirit of the agreements and others where they had violated the letter; the Department's brief was that none of these violations was really dangerous. Kennedy's statement, I hasten to say, came much earlier, but the point is that the expectation that the Soviets would scrupulously avoid even the "first sign" of a violation could only have been based on profound ignorance of how the Soviets have historically behaved.

Moreover, the question of compliance casts light on the question of intentions. SALT critics charge that the Soviets hope to use SALT to gain nuclear superiority. SALT supporters say that, at bottom, the Soviets share the desire to restrain the nuclear arms race. Kennedy, by contrast, has said—and so I quoted him—that SALT is important to us "regardless of Moscow's motives and capabilities." This, in my view, is naive.

2. Mr. Weintraub asks what other "commitments" I would have the U.S. undertake. One other com-

mitment which the U.S. has undertaken—as recently as President Carter's State of the Union message—is to the defense of the Persian Gulf. I'll endorse that. Moreover, although there are countries which we may not wish to be obligated to defend, it would, in my view, be very unwise to announce a list of countries which we feel duty bound not to defend no matter what the threat or circumstances.

The word "commitment" was my word, not Kennedy's, and I realize, after seeing Mr. Weintraub's interpretation, that I used it too loosely—making Kennedy's position sound more moderate than in fact it was. Kennedy was not asserting, as Mr. Weintraub seems to think, that NATO, Japan, and Israel should be the only places to whose defense we are firmly obligated, while leaving open the possibility of action in other places as circumstances might warrant. Rather, he was asserting a principle of exclusion: that we must avoid taking action in any place other than those enumerated. These three places alone, he said, were the "areas where our interests and security are truly at stake."

3. Mr. Weintraub wonders how many Americans share my disagreement with Kennedy's prescription that the United States should refrain from trying to "manipulate the process of change" in the world. Judging from congressional and executive-branch support for easing restrictions on the CIA's capacity to engage in covert action—probably the most controversial way of trying to "manipulate change"—it would seem that a great many do.

4. I did not fault Kennedy for his advocacy of greater generosity in our foreign aid, but for coupling that advocacy with a call for lessening our efforts to use foreign aid to exert American influence. This call consisted not only in Kennedy's support for giving a larger portion of aid through multilateral institutions, but also in his vigorously stated objections to steps taken by the Ford administration (no doubt inspired by Ambassador's Moynihan's experience at the UN) to attach certain strings to U.S. aid. "It must be clear to all," demanded Kennedy, "that the administration would not penalize major developing countries however they act at the UN or elsewhere."

5. Mr. Weintraub lapses into demagoguery when he taxes me with wanting to "criticize our enemies no matter with what results and [to] refrain from criticizing our 'friends.'" I do not take this view, nor did I do so in the article. There are, however, many good reasons why it might make sense to be tougher in dealing with Communist countries than with our "right-wing" allies (Communism is in general far more brutal; its brutality is a matter of conviction, i.e., "class struggle"; our diplomacy should give *some* weight to how another nation behaves toward us—to mention just three reasons).

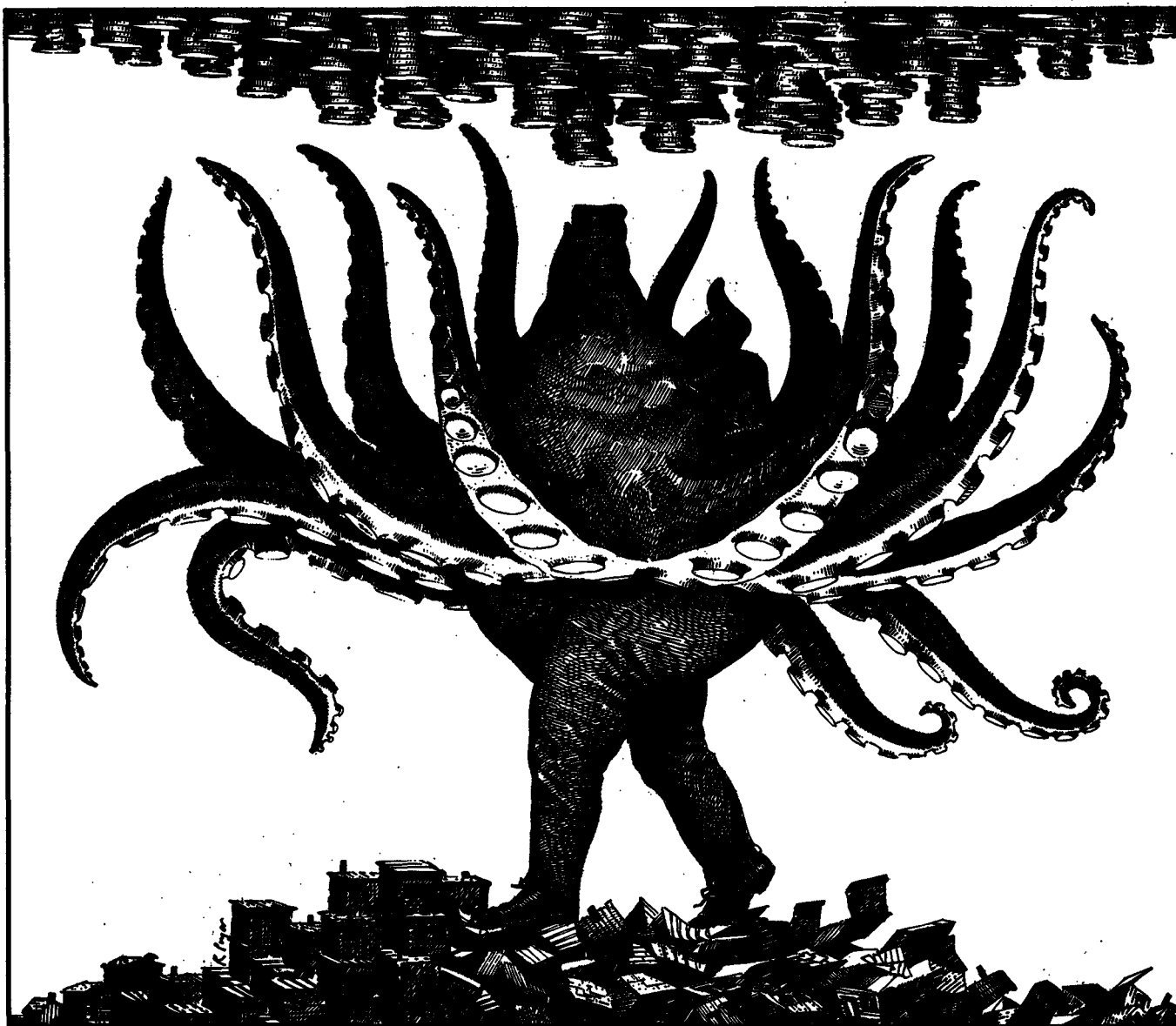
The main point is that Kennedy has consistently advocated getting tougher on friendly countries and opposed getting tougher on unfriendly ones. Mr. Weintraub's defense of this contradiction is that we have more "leverage" over our friends. Whatever the validity of this proposition, it does not explain Kennedy's position because Kennedy has repeatedly opposed concrete steps to use what leverage we clearly have—trade, diplomatic recognition, scientific exchange—in our dealings with Cuba, the USSR, and China.

Mr. Weintraub proposes that our human-rights policy should be "differentiated by the extent of our control" over the country in question, in other words, that we should concentrate our pressure on those countries which are weakest and most dependent on us. It is as hard to see the moral foundations for such an approach as it is to see how the national interest would be served by it. Nor is it very clear how this squares with Mr. Weintraub's doctrine of non-manipulation of the process of change.

Blacks & Terrorism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I should like to make some additional observations on the situation described by Carl Gershman in his article, "The Andrew Young Affair" [November 1979]. What is most disheartening and disturbing about the views of those who have recently become leading advocates of the PLO in this country is their rejection of history, their failure to recognize that terrorism is evil, no matter in what guise it appears, and their studied indifference to gross



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violations of human rights and human life perpetrated against blacks and Asians.

The entry of American black leaders and their organizations into the realm of international human rights is to be welcomed. Their involvement *could* enrich the public dialogue on so many of these issues. But the fact is that, with some notable exceptions, they have been conspicuously absent in word and deed as several hundred thousand black Christians have been slaughtered in the southern Sudan; as 15 per cent of the black population of Equatorial Guinea has been liquidated; as Uganda's Idi Amin killed an estimated 500,000 of his own citizens, of whom 300,000 were Christians; as 200 schoolchildren in the Central African Empire were murdered; and as 2 to 3 million Cambodians have been slaughtered. When an attempt was made through American religious and lay organizations to organize massive relief for tens of thousands of starving Biafran children, again with some notable exceptions, American black leaders were conspicuously absent from the effort. Why this apathy, this disregard for human lives, for black lives? Was the absence of outrage due to the fact that the perpetrators and the victims were of the same color?

It is this selective response to the grossest violations of human decency which is so disturbing. The life of a black African Christian or tribesman, a Cambodian refugee, a Vietnamese boat person, a Lebanese Christian must become as precious to the human family as the Israeli schoolchild who is murdered by a PLO terrorist. Those who embrace the PLO, turning their backs on the inhumanity of that group, have rejected the fundamental roots of our Judeo-Christian civilization and unleashed the forces of bigotry in this country and abroad. The politicization and internationalization of anti-Semitism which they have begun must be checked, must be fought by every American who honors decency, honesty, and life itself.

RICHARD MAASS
President, American Jewish
Committee
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Carl Gershman's analysis of the Andrew Young affair is cogent and frighteningly accurate. It outlines

the tragic sequence of events that many of us know began on college campuses well over a decade ago as too many permissive educators on campuses across the nation stepped aside in the face of anti-Semitic assaults by colleagues and students. Guilty about a racist past in which they played no role, they could not understand that they were helping to build a present in which, once again, Jews would become victimized. Much of this took place in departments of Black Studies that were hastily established to appease those who were blinded by hatred and those who were overcome with guilt.

I know that most COMMENTARY readers must, by now, be familiar with the courageous statement published by Julius Lester in the *Village Voice* and, later, in the *New York Times*. . . . [But] on his own campus, Julius Lester is a man alone. Few of his colleagues in the department of Afro-American studies speak to him and students, in an insidious attempt to politicize the student body by using McCarthy-like tactics, are being encouraged to boycott Mr. Lester's course, "Blacks and Jews: A Comparative Study of Oppression." After the failure to prevent Mr. Lester from offering the course, which deals with slavery and the Holocaust, another course was designed to be taught by someone with the "right" political perspective. Aside from the tragic fact that black students will miss a chance to study the material with a first-rate writer and a first-rate mind, they will be given a polemic by the forces who oppose Mr. Lester simply because he has the tenacity to resist the anti-Semitism which is burgeoning among the black student body at the University of Massachusetts. . . .

MARTIN S. GOLDMAN
Newton Highlands, Massachusetts

Funding Art

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his article, "Art vs. the Arts" [November 1979], Ronald Berman is concerned principally with the visual arts. They are, he believes, threatened by two elements in our culture: the emergence of public patronage, with its insistence on majority participation, and the attitude, voiced by many visual artists, that "standards are relics of the past." Together, he fears, these elements may undermine the ad-

herence to standards and to quality which helped to generate great art in the past.

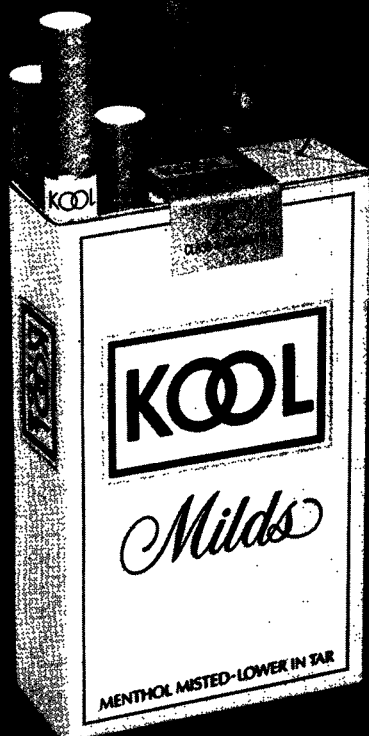
This important issue was raised in a forceful manner in Britain two years ago. In resigning from the British Arts Council, Roy Fuller held that "public money for the arts cannot be properly dispensed without a strong regard in the dispensing body for standards of excellence and principles of value." He went on to denounce the Council for "shirking" its responsibilities out of a "morbid fear" of making artistic judgments. In response, the Secretary General of the Council, Roy Shaw, agreed that standards are essential ("If we abandon this notion of standards, chaos is come again"). He ranged himself with Fuller and against the artists who rejected the concept that there are standards of excellence in the arts. He maintained that the Council could and did make valid judgments of artistic quality.

A third view was expressed by Lord Redcliffe-Maud who affirmed his own belief in standards of artistic excellence, but who noted that "neither in painting nor in music have we reached agreement even among serious critics on standards of judgment by which the genius can be distinguished from the phony."

I share Lord Redcliffe-Maud's opinion as far as the visual arts are concerned. And I am certain that democratic government is a clumsy mechanism for arriving at the artistic judgments which, on occasion, must be made. For this, and for many other reasons, I have argued for the past fifteen years (I served as deputy chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts from 1969 to 1978) that governments should not undertake to be direct and predominant patrons of the individual creative artist. (The House of Representatives, incidentally, took the same view in 1968, and prohibited the National Endowment for the Arts from making direct grants to individuals. The Endowment, unhappily, chose to ignore it.)

Mr. Berman is saddened because the Arts Endowment cannot lay claim to the creation of any great work of art. My own view is that government lacks the wisdom to attempt any such exalted task. He notes that "it is easy to attack NEA for its subservience to institutions." Again, I prefer a subservient to an overbearing role. In most 15th-cen-

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tury paintings, the Virgin and Child are front and center; the patron kneels in a corner and comes up to the Virgin's ankle. That, I think, is as it should be.

MICHAEL STRAIGHT
Bethesda, Maryland

RONALD BERMAN writes:

Michael Straight is one of the most knowledgeable men in the art world and his comments deserve to be taken seriously. He has mentioned the British Arts Council and suggested that its operation may bear on that of the National Endowment for the Arts. In some respects it does, but I would put a somewhat different interpretation on the issues.

There are really two sets of issues: political and intellectual; as we often find them, quite separate. There is good reason to doubt that government agencies are able to judge art—but not much reason to doubt that art can be and should be evaluated. The presumption is that NEA panelists, reviewers, and board members supply the expertise that the staff alone does not have. While the agency ought not to insist on its own interpretation of things, it ought to recognize that it has to set *some* kind of standard. Mr. Straight's own book, *Twigs for an Eagle's Nest*, has some of the funniest pages ever written on that subject, especially those describing his reaction to a (funded) application for dripping ink from Wyoming to Idaho in order to honor Jackson Pollock and Ezra Pound.

Standards are set and distinctions observed every day: for example, when museum exhibitions silently include some things and exclude others; or when art histories talk about the development of our culture in reference to understood values, objects, techniques, styles, ideas, and accomplishments. I have myself greatly benefited from scholarship on this matter, especially by writings like Jakob Rosenberg's *On Quality in Art* which assess the degree to which the artist uses or exceeds the techniques available to him. Very few critics or historians would agree with the statement that we can't distinguish between "the genius" and "the phony." If we can't do that, we can't do anything.

I don't object to Van Eyck painting the patron in a corner and coming up to the Virgin's ankles—what I want is to see a reasonable facsimile of the lady herself.

But, of course, the main issue is political. We are not really talking about the self-effacement of the Renaissance but of an agency that donates entertainment. Its principles are to spread money as far as it will go; to imitate the workings of HEW and other domestic agencies; to insist upon forms of equity like age, color, and sex which are moral and political rather than artistic; to disseminate its funds among fifty groups—the State Councils—whose primary function is lobbying for funds and spending them on the creation of a bureaucracy; to encourage political and quasi-political groups to support the administration by conveying funds to them, regardless of artistic effect, function, or capability; to identify art as hobbies, crafts, individual pursuits, group modes of "participation," regional fairs, clambakes, or assertions of consciousness; and to suggest, above all, that the distribution of funds from a pork-barrel is the same thing that Van Eyck understood as patronage.

So, I agree that government, or any other source of funds, should recognize the limits of its own imagination. But I do think that standards may be seen wherever art differs from what is not art. The main issue is the political benefit that accrues from the disposition of money: sending dollar bills flowing down a viaduct to every constituency within our electorate. We will have few Van Eycks, but a great many (funded) projects for dripping ink from Cody to Pocatello.

Reform Judaism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While I find myself in substantial agreement with much of what Julius Weinberg says in "The Trouble with Reform Judaism" [November 1979], I find it difficult to identify myself with the "Jakob J. Petuchowski" whom he describes. According to that description, Petuchowski favors "a measure of ritual norms," he would "lead Reform to a greater acceptance of the concept of Jewish peoplehood and toward the adoption of a more observant regimen," and "would purge the movement of the intellectual atavisms Reform has inherited from its 19th-century origins; for Petuchowski these are represented by the higher biblical criticism and comparative anthropology."

There is a certain validity in the

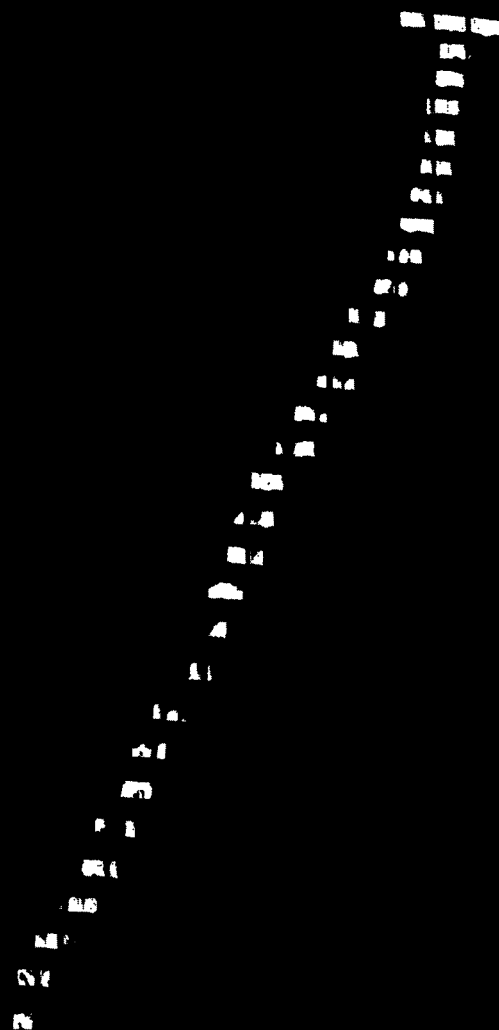
first two attributions—provided that the reader knows that the "Jewish peoplehood" which I champion is a *religious* concept of "peoplehood," and provided that the reader is made aware of the distinctions which I draw among personal observance, communal observance, and the laws of "personal status" governing one's membership in *k'lal yisrael*. Those distinctions carry with them different degrees of normative authority.

But I am not aware of ever having called upon Reform Judaism to purge itself of the higher biblical criticism and comparative anthropology. That would mean letting dogmatic considerations interfere with scholarly research—hardly a mental attitude which would have made me choose the Hebrew Union College as the environment in which I work. Admittedly, I hold no brief for any one particular theory about the development of biblical literature; and the fashions in biblical research have a tendency to change rather rapidly, making it incumbent upon the scholar to keep an open mind. That is why, in my teaching and in my writing, I have repeatedly made the point that the belief in Revelation—a theological, not a literary issue—must not be too closely tied to any one scholarly hypothesis, ancient or modern, about the origins and development of ancient Hebrew literature, and why I have advocated a basically Rosenzweigian approach to the belief in Revelation. ("Even if Wellhausen should turn out to have been correct, the Redactor of the Pentateuch would still be *Rabbenu*, and his work, our *Torah*.") But this, I would respectfully submit, is a far cry from being opposed to higher biblical criticism and comparative anthropology.

JAKOB J. PETUCHOWSKI
Hebrew Union College-
Jewish Institute of Religion
Cincinnati, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As we all know, it is the task of serious, independent journalism to bare the full truth on the subjects with which it deals, no matter how unpleasant, no matter how much hostility it may provoke on the part of vested interests. For its own spiritual health, Reform Judaism—and every other manifestation of organized Jewish life—requires and deserves such critical analysis by those who stand outside its institutional framework.



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If only the article by Julius Weinberg were written as such a critique! If only its biases were not so apparent, its snide use of derogatory adjectives less abundant, its frequent descent to the level of "hatchet job" less vitiating of its presumptive purpose. To be sure, there are some aspects of Reform which Mr. Weinberg clearly likes: the turn to tradition and survivalism on the part of some, the new prayerbook. But in general he tells us less about Reform Judaism than about his own incapacity to overcome ingrained prejudices against it.

When Mr. Weinberg comes to a discussion of Eugene Borowitz's work he writes with such venom that the reader must wonder what motivates so furious a diatribe. It is certainly most difficult to recognize the journal *Sh'ma* from Mr. Weinberg's jaundiced description of it. Far from serving as the platform for a particular point of view, *Sh'ma* is one of the few magazines in the American Jewish community which actively promotes free discussion of the vital issues affecting the Jewish people and religion. Its contributing editors represent a wide variety of viewpoints—and most of them are not Reform Jews.

On one point Mr. Weinberg is unquestionably correct (though he is scarcely the first to state it): Reform Judaism is today deeply divided on both theological and practical issues. But an impartial observer would have to leave open the question of whether such division necessarily implies spiritual malaise, or whether it may indicate the resurgence of an inner dialectic which invigorates as it breaks down an outworn consensus and moves toward a new, perhaps more adequate resolution.

MICHAEL A. MEYER

Hebrew Union College-
Jewish Institute of Religion
Cincinnati, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:
Julius Weinberg's "The Trouble with Reform Judaism" is based largely on his impressions. While I share what I believe are his prejudices against Reform, I believe they have blinded his judgment. "Spiritual health" is a subject for legitimate disagreement, but the reader would never guess, for example, that Reform Judaism, unlike Orthodoxy and Conservatism, is growing numerically. Reform has problems, but I think the leaders of

both Orthodoxy and Conservatism would be happy if their problems were no more serious than those of Reform.

I take particular exception to Mr. Weinberg's attack on Eugene Borowitz and *Sh'ma*. In my opinion, Eugene Borowitz has done more than any single figure among Reform leaders to reorient the movement to an ideology and style that are at least in touch with conceptions of traditional Judaism. I can attest to my indebtedness to Borowitz's work in clarifying my thinking about Judaism and my own point of view. The portrait of *Sh'ma* which Mr. Weinberg paints is simply inaccurate. There is no publication in Jewish life that deliberately solicits and consistently obtains as divergent a group of contributors. The voices of Orthodox Jews, for example, are heard with such frequency that I have often suspected a deliberate effort to overrepresent them. The fact that Orthodox and politically conservative Jews find in *Sh'ma* a natural forum for their opinions surely belies Mr. Weinberg's conclusion.

CHARLES S. LIEBMAN

Bar-Ilan University
Ramat-Gan, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Julius Weinberg . . . has decided that the synagogue is in decline and there is a definite "diminution" in the quality of lay leadership. He further assails Reform Judaism for the fact that it contains a wide range of beliefs and customs within its institutional walls. Finally, he tells us that the Reform rabbi can no longer play a dynamic role in the community.

The only trouble with these criticisms is that they stand diametrically opposed to my experience as a young Reform rabbi. The synagogue, especially the synagogue in the South (the bastion of Reform Judaism and the region of the fastest growth in this country), has been, is now, and will continue to be the center of Jewish life. There is not one evening a week when our young synagogue is not bustling with some sort of social or religious activity. Note the word "young." The majority of my congregation, most with one or two children, are well under forty. For them Judaism is a heritage that they do not wish to forsake. They never considered Orthodoxy because they found its beliefs about infallibility implausible in a modern world. Conserva-

tive Judaism they found too hypocritical. . . .

Young Jews are looking for a Judaism that makes sense to them as individuals and to the way they live . . . in America. Reform Judaism supplies the freedom of choice that allows for their individuality. It gives to Jews not *one* Judaism, but many Jewish options from which, as intelligent individuals, they can choose. . . .

[Rabbi] JAN BRESKY

**Temple Ahavat Shalom
Dunedin, Florida**

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Julius Weinberg points out that there are no reservoirs of people waiting to revitalize Reform as was the case prior to World War II when thousands of East European Jews gave new life to a then moribund institution. But even if we grant Mr. Weinberg his premise, that Reform is becoming once again anemic and in need of new blood, there does exist a potential reservoir which many overlook—namely, Conservative Jewry.

It has been my observation that, with some minor exceptions, Reform and Conservative Jewry have been moving closer and closer together since World War II, and especially since the Six-Day War. For a myriad of reasons, self-professed Conservative Jews no longer believe in keeping kosher, observing fasts, maintaining the Passover and other religious observances. . .

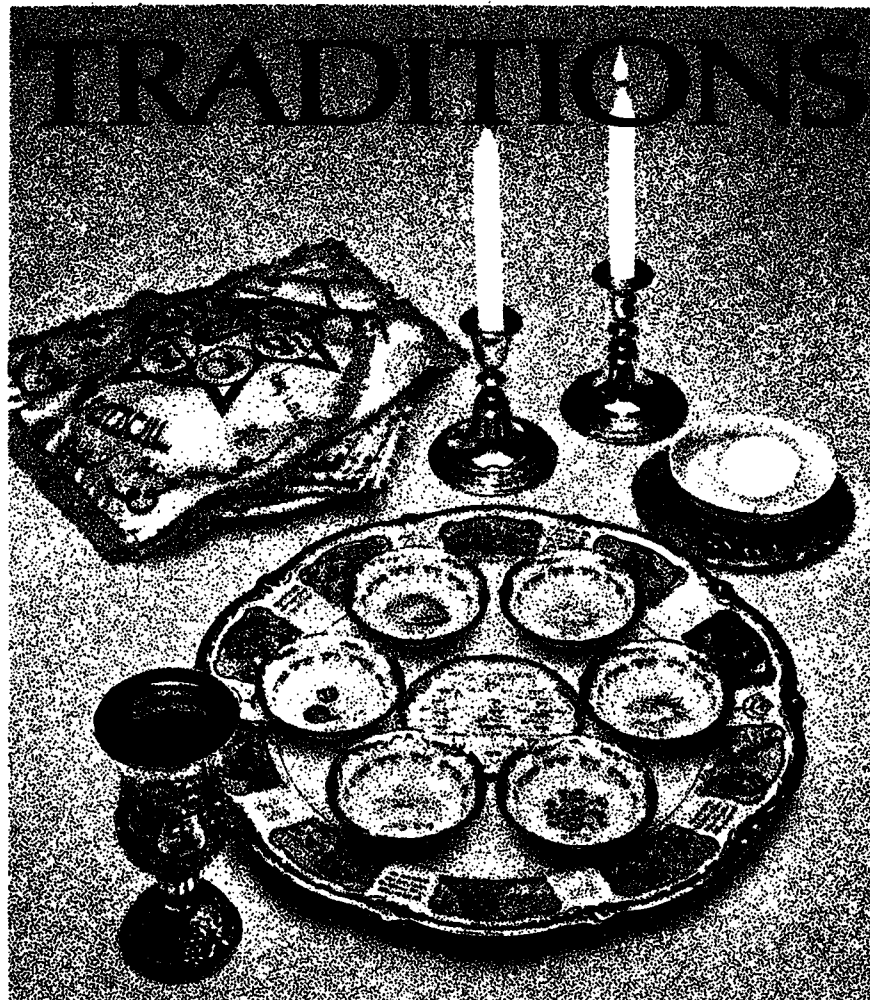
As Reform moves closer to a traditional religious service (as it continually has done in the postwar era), the distinctions between Reform and Conservatism will blur even further. This will lead to a crisis of identity which is already brewing within Conservative circles. . . .

RICHARD I. WALLSH
Gainesville, Florida

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The first trouble with Julius Weinberg's article is that it has the wrong title. Based on the evidence he himself reveals, as well as the internal evidence of the course of Jewish history, it should have been entitled "The Continued Vitality and Creativity of Reform Judaism."

Mr. Weinberg states that "... Reform has become fragmented in matters of theology and ritual ..." and describes the differing views of a number of distinguished Reform scholars and rabbis. . . . [But] Reform is fortunate in having such a



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galaxy of brilliant and scholarly men. The expression of such divergent views is not an indication of the fragmentation of the movement, but rather of its strength. . . .

At times, some of these views may seem extreme, even irreconcilable, but the movement has always had, and still has, a central core of thought, inner strength, balance and civility, as well as the good sense to find the way toward essential unity. . . .

In its early days in America, Reform was divided by the rift between the moderate Isaac Mayer Wise group and the more extreme David Einhorn group, yet the movement eventually reached a consensus. If Reform, in its early period of development and search for identity, could survive the fierce Wise-Einhorn battles and grow in strength and unity, certainly it can survive and be strengthened by the less deeply rooted differences of today.

In his approval of conformity and ideology, Mr. Weinberg seems not to understand the very essence of Judaism over its long history. It survived creatively precisely because it was not ideological. It encompassed, in many periods, wide varieties of thought and practice and did change . . . to meet the specific needs of different times. . . .

Space does not permit detailing the many battles within Judaism from its early days; priests and prophets, Sadducees and Pharisees, and many others up until our very time with the need to adjust in some way to modern nationalism, the age of Enlightenment, the Holocaust, Israel and the Arabs, and other problems of our day. But in each period, Judaism shifted its emphasis effectively, sometimes toward liberalism, sometimes toward traditionalism, and therefore was able to survive creatively.

And so it happened in America.

It is impossible here to examine fully the whole course of American Judaism. I am attempting to do this in a book, almost finished, on the growth and varieties of American Judaism. Suffice it to say: American Judaism has had four fairly definite periods: the Colonial Sephardic, the German Jewish, the East European, and now what many call the American period. In each period there were varieties of thought and practice, yet in the main, in each period, there emerged a fairly clear, dominant, and effective pattern of Judaism,

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depending on the background of the Jews who came here, the America to which they came, and the world in which they lived.

Mr. Weinberg castigates Classical Reform Judaism for its "now bankrupt ideological assumptions" including rationality, the goodness of man, and the belief in progress. He might just as well have attacked the Sephardic establishment for its autocracy, the East European period for the alienation of many Jews, and so on. It is not good history to prophesy after the event. Each period of history must be judged in terms of the effectiveness of its response to the prevailing times.

In the period in which American Reform grew and expanded, starting about 1850 and continuing into the early 20th century, the spirit of the age, especially in America, was precisely a profound belief in rationality, goodness, and progress. By responding affirmatively to the times, Reform not only did not serve as a halfway house to assimilation (a grossly misunderstood word) or apostasy, but actually saved Judaism in America. If it had not emphasized these attitudes, also inherent in Judaism as a whole, American Jews would have left Judaism in droves. For without such an emphasis, Judaism would not have met their need to live honestly and proudly as Jews and Americans in an environment which seemed to prove, almost daily, the virtue and validity of reason and education, economic progress and expansion, and a growing kinship of all Americans. Nor was Reform Judaism alone in these assumptions. The writings, sermons, and religious textbooks of some Conservative and even moderate Orthodox leaders reflected the same views.

A perusal of the minutes of most Reform congregations discloses that they moved slowly and at their own pace in changing traditional customs. There was a brief period, known as Classical Reform, when observance was at a minimum. But this was only a part of the process of ongoing Reform and the situation began to change, starting as early as the 1930's, when a different world atmosphere was dawning. This was revealed in the Columbus platform of 1937. . . .

It is not true that Reform is losing out in competition with Conservatism and Orthodoxy. A recent

study by Bernard Lazerwitz of Bar-Ilan University in Israel, *Past and Future Trends in the Size of American Jewish Denominations*, reveals that, as more American Jews are born in this country, more of their children tend to move into the Reform camp. He states that when both the parents are native born, "The Conservative and Reform members are running neck and neck. However, the Reform group has just about a two-to-one advantage among those who identify with either denomination, but are not synagogue members. In short, the Reform denomination appears to have the greater number of 'reserves.'"

Another recent study, by the American Association for Jewish Education, further discloses that the Reform movement educates more American Jewish students than any other Jewish religious group, has grown the fastest since 1974, and has shown the most dramatic increase in hours of instruction since 1962.

The facts are that the organized Reform movement today numbers some one million Jews. Although Reform was begun primarily by German Jews here, it must be pointed out that only some 200,000 such Jews came to America as compared to, approximately, two million East European Jews, who immigrated generally after 1880. Reform could not be so large today if it had not successfully won over many Jews of East European origin. And, obviously, the studies just mentioned reveal that the process is continuing.

I report these facts simply as facts. I am not disturbed that Orthodoxy and Conservatism have become strong. To the contrary, I am quite pleased, for this situation, with its opportunity for dialogue, is indicative of the increased vitality of American Judaism.

To sum up, Reform today is not only not in danger of splitting apart, but has again reached a general consensus. . . . In fact, the conflicts within Reform are less severe and bitter than those in the other movements. Nevertheless, it is my feeling that the other movements will weather their differences and that, for the foreseeable future, all these major groups in America will continue vigorously and creatively.

[Rabbi] ALLAN TARSHISH
Glencoe, Illinois

JULIUS WEINBERG writes:

I am gratified to learn that Jakob J. Petuchowski, a member of the Hebrew Union College faculty and author of a number of monographs on the history of Reform Judaism, finds himself in "substantial agreement" with much of what I had to say about the current state of the movement. Let me hasten to assure him that I did not intend to label him an anti-intellectual. There is no disagreement between us concerning his contention that the concept of Revelation is central to his theology and that, hence, his views on Jewish belief and practice are independent of whatever may be the findings of scholarly research. It should be noted, however, that this concept, the supremacy of Revelation, marks a considerable departure from the motifs of religious rationalism and naturalism that characterized the thinking of the Classical Reformers before and after the turn of the century and that characterizes the anti-nomian wing of the movement today. As for my assertion that Rabbi Petuchowski rejects the evolutionary anthropology and literary criticism of the now discredited scholarship of the 19th-century biblical scholars, I based my observation on an essay of his, published in a 1967 anthology on Reform theology, in which he attacked much of this literature and concluded that "inasmuch . . . as Reform's lack of traditional Jewish practice is justified, or, better, rationalized in terms of primitive origins, *Wissenschaft*, and the higher criticism of the Bible, we have seen that Reform is moving in the realm of fallacies."

Michael A. Meyer and Charles S. Liebman suggest that my view of Reform Judaism is the product of my "prejudices": Mr. Liebman contends that my essay is a reflection of my "impressions" and Mr. Meyer sees even darker psychological forces at work. Yet at no point in their letters, essentially *ad hominem* attacks on my perspective and motives, do these scholars cite a single instance of where I misconstrued, misused, or misquoted my principal sources—Mr. Meyer's own history of Hebrew Union College, the Fein and Lenn reports, the *Centenary Perspectives*, and Eugene B. Borowitz's three volumes, *Reform Judaism Today*. To level charges of "prejudice" against an author is an easy way out; an

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even-tempered response to my piece would have required chapter-and-verse citations of precisely which documents I misinterpreted or which sources I abused.

Regarding *Sh'ma*, both Messrs. Liebman and Meyer feel that this publication plays a positive role on the American Jewish scene. I obviously disagree, and my reasons are clearly set forth in the article.

There is a distinctly *déjà vu* quality to the tone of Rabbi Jan Bresky's letter, reminiscent of the 1950's, when families with young children sought membership in the newly-founded synagogues and temples of another frontier—suburbia. The test will come, as the Lenn study makes amply clear, when those youngsters are confirmed and married, and their parents conclude that the family no longer needs the temple for social identity or immediately urgent rites of passage.

To Richard I. Wallsh: while some Reform leaders may be happy to learn that, in addition to converts to Judaism from mixed marriages, there is yet another "potential reservoir" of membership for Reform Judaism—i.e., nonobservant Conservative Jews—others may conclude that an influx into the Reform ranks of backsliding Conservative Jews will diminish rather than enhance the quality—and the sense of purpose and direction—of the Reform movement in this country.

The letter from Rabbi Allan Tarshish demonstrates that he is a true believer in the intellectual dogmas and ideological clichés that suffuse the thinking of some in the Reform movement. Among these is the belief that the durability of Judaism is the consequence of religious tolerance and pluralism; that philosophical and ritualistic division is a positive good and a source of institutional strength; and that the American Jewish experience is essentially a spiritual progression, going, as it is said by the rabbis, "from strength to strength." Rabbi Tarshish concludes that Reform is in a state of "continued vitality and creativity." I do not share this view, and little in the evidence presented by Rabbi Tarshish would lead me to change my mind.

For example, the Lazerwitz study he cites as a sign of Reform's vitality demonstrates nothing of the kind. Bernard Lazerwitz simply concludes that: (a) third-generation American Jews tend to identify themselves as Reform or Con-

servative rather than Orthodox; and (b) nonaffiliated third-generation Jews—those, I would suggest, who have minimal affiliation, practice, or identity—label themselves Reform.

Regarding the study of the American Association for Jewish Education, here, too, the conclusions are less sanguine than Rabbi Tarshish would have it. According to the Association's most recent Information Bulletin, the one-day-a-week school is still typical of Reform education and consequently attracts the largest enrollment in the nation. While the AAJE study finds that "Reform education has become more intensified"—a drop in one-day-a-week enrollment and an ever-so-slight increase in day-school enrollment—it also states that "the proportionate enrollment in schools with Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform ideology has remained about the same."

A final word: the "trouble" with Reform Judaism cannot and should not be divorced from the "trouble" of the larger Jewish community of which it is an integral part. The increasing distance of the American Jewish community from its European roots of literacy, piety, and culture, combined with the phenomenal socioeconomic mobility and acculturation of American Jews, is clearly exacting a toll which is now being borne most heavily by the Reform sector of the community (with Conservative Judaism, one would suspect, soon to follow).

The disturbing inability of American and, indeed, Western Jewry to enjoy the best of both worlds is not a new phenomenon, but a conundrum that historians have traced to the generation of Moses Mendelssohn two hundred years ago. In his monograph, *The Origins of the Modern Jew: Jewish Identity and European Culture in Germany, 1749-1824*, Michael A. Meyer sums up the verdict of historians—that Mendelssohn's generation failed to find an answer to the question, "Why should a man of European culture remain a Jew?" Mr. Meyer writes: "Two centuries have passed, . . . but the problem today remains essentially the same—except that America has been substituted for Europe. The American Jew, desiring to be as much a part of American culture as Mendelssohn and his successors did of European, is engaged in the same quest for Jewish self-defini-

tion. . . . It remains to be seen whether he will be able to draw significant content from the Jewish tradition to shape a uniquely Jewish identity. If not, Jewish consciousness will gradually dissipate and dissolve into the free American milieu, leaving only the religious heritage to live on . . . 'as the current lives on in the ocean.'"

Glenn Gould

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Samuel Lipman's long and adulatory article, "Glenn Gould's Dissent" [Music, November 1979], draws a dissent from me. In his performances of Bach's keyboard music, Gould displays excellent technique. But he also displays occasional sharp departures from good taste. I appreciate the desire of a recitalist to present a new interpretation of a classic, thereby distinguishing his performances from conventional ones. But I prefer to hear conventional interpretations that are in good taste to unconventional ones, such as those of Gould, that are sometimes in poor taste. . . .

Let me give an example. I frequently listen to part or all of the Prelude of Bach's Partita no. 1 in B-flat, played by Gould, because it happens to be the theme of a program on my favorite radio station, WETA in Washington, D.C. This piece has an occasional trill in either hand (two of them appear in the first measure in the right hand). Gould plays these trills louder than the melody. The effect is ludicrous. . . . Gould also introduces numerous embellishments which are not in the original text or in the original spirit, and plays some chords broken which are unbroken in the original, especially the very last chord of the Prelude, which gives this dignified piece a flip ending.

Many other examples could be given, such as Gould's occasional tendency to play a well-executed staccato when the manuscript does not call for it, and when it is in poor taste.

Is it an accident that Gould's denigration of Mozart, cited by Mr. Lipman, is that toward a composer whose music displays a sense of taste more exquisite than that of most other composers?

I am aware that taste is a highly subjective matter. But I dispute Mr. Lipman's contention that Gould is rejected for his bold inno-

ventions themselves. Unfortunately the innovations are at times the wrong kind. . . .

GEORGE J. SCHULLER
Washington, D.C.

SAMUEL LIPMAN writes:

It is plain from George J. Schuller's remarks on Gould, Bach, and Mozart that in music he prefers classical restraint and the observance of previously agreed-upon limits. Such a position is not only an honorable but indeed a necessary one if music is to continue in an orderly fashion. Unfortunately this conservative way of looking at the performance of music written up to the death of Brahms has by now hardened into a tyrannical orthodoxy; just how powerful this tradition has by now become may be gathered from Mr. Schuller's strong rejection of the very trifling liberties Gould takes in the opening of the Bach Partita.

For more general evidence of this state of affairs, one need only go to any hundred professional concerts. Here the listener will find unlimited good taste and respect for the composers. What will only rarely be found is any individuality at all. When one does find an individual approach, and when it is based, as it is in Gould's case, upon what Mr. Schuller himself calls "excellent technique," one can only applaud its existence. This is a matter beyond listeners' likes or dislikes, for when individual creativity is lacking, replication becomes a meaningless task.

On Language

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a reviewer, Robert M. Adams is of course entitled to evaluate my book, *A Lion for Love: A Critical Biography of Stendhal* [Books in Review, December 1979], in whatever terms he sees fit, and it is hardly my place to question either his conclusions or his motives. The curious allegations, however, that he makes about the style of the book are so misleading that they should not go unchallenged.

I shall leave it to readers to judge for themselves whether even the supposedly damaging examples Mr. Adams has chosen to cite justify his vituperative characterization of the prose as "a thick impasto of academic jargon, blue-jeans American informality, and mixed metaphors." (The one quoted instance of a mixed meta-

phor—the switch from living in clover to a lame duck paddling through cold waters—is of course quite deliberate, in order to introduce a wry reversal of worn images that mirrors the reversal of Stendhal's naive expectations as a newly appointed consul.) Beyond these judgmental generalizations, Mr. Adams's catalogue of "inexact or uncouth" usages is firmly founded on his own factual errors and odd misconceptions, and these deserve correction.

(1) "Importunacy," according to the Oxford English Dictionary, has been with us since 1548, and none of the dictionaries I consulted indicates that it is obsolete, archaic, or otherwise substandard. (2) A generally available meaning of "tenor," and precisely the one I intended, is, as the OED has it, "quality, character, nature," and in that sense it is perfectly valid to speak of the *Chartreuse's* "unique tenor . . . among the novels of the age." (3) A "residue" is anything

left over, whether by design or accidentally, whether to be used or to be discarded. "Distillation," according to the OED, is "the operation of separating by means of fire, and in closed vessels, the volatile from the fixed parts of any substance." The result of this process, as I correctly wrote, is a residue. (4) "Boudoir" in the sexual sense is not used repeatedly but three times in 285 pages. In each of these instances, the slightly quaint false elegance of the term is deliberately invoked in order to produce a comic or ironic effect. For example, Stendhal's Uncle Romain and Cousin Martial, whom he liked to think of as master strategists of seduction, are referred to as "those Clausewitzes of the boudoir." It is a little perplexing that a writer so sprightly as Mr. Adams should grimly refuse to see the humor in such a phrase. (5) The fact that Mr. Adams presents an obvious typographical error, "roles" for "rolls," as the author's mistaken usage, reveals

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Thought

A Review of Culture and Idea

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how far he has to reach to draw out his list of supposed faults of style. (6) "Marginalium" is indeed an error, for which I can only plead ignorance, as Dr. Johnson did when caught out in his mistaken definition of "pastern," and as Mr. Adams must do in the case of "importunacy," "tenor," and "distilled residue."

ROBERT ALTER
Berkeley, California

ROBERT M. ADAMS writes:

I am sorry that Robert Alter's book is so poorly written; indeed I cannot help it. As he surely knows, the presence of a word in the dictionary is no evidence that it has been used accurately or appropriately. To take his three last instances briefly in hand: the residue of purification consists of the dregs and refuse material that one throws away; it is not properly applied to the product of distillation, which is what one wants to keep. "Tenor" does have a tertiary meaning of "quality, character, nature," but it is far outweighed by other meanings; you would not find Red Smith, for example, writing that "A running back of O.J. Simpson's tenor rarely comes along." There is a form "importunacy," and it was used in 1548, though rarely since; there are also forms "importunance" and "importunateness," minor and ungainly variations on the common form "importunity," which reaches us with a clean, straight pedigree through French from Latin. One is never in doubt as to what Mr. Alter means; one is often distressed by his deafness to the overtones of words and the anomalies of his phrasing.

The Socialist International

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

That the Socialist International continues whoring after a false "third force," a sad departure from democratic principles ably analyzed by Carl Gershman in "The Socialists and the PLO" [October 1979], is confirmed by SI vice president Michael Manley's speech at the recent Havana summit of the non-aligned nations. All anti-imperialists, said Manley,

know that the balance of forces in the world shifted irrevocably in 1917 when there was a Movement and a Man in the October Revolution and Lenin: catalyst and rock. . . . No area of the world has had a more ex-

tended exposure to, experience of, or proximity to imperialism than Latin America and the Caribbean . . . ; and yet, I dare to assert that, despite . . . tragic reversals, the forces committed to the struggle against imperialism are stronger today than ever before. We believe that this is so because our hemisphere has had a Movement and a Man: a catalyst and a rock; and the Movement is the Cuban Revolution, the Man is Fidel Castro.

At Havana, Castro attempted to force the nonaligned nations into line with the Soviet Union. Manley provided ideological cover. After praising Cuba's actions in Angola, Manley made the point: "The case of Angola and the use to which some have tried to put it, goes to the heart of the question: what is the nonaligned movement and to what is it committed?" After the usual recitation—anti-imperialist, anti-this-and-that—Manley continued:

There are some, particularly certain spokesmen of the developed countries, who would have us believe that nonalignment goes beyond a refusal to be a part of blocs based upon military alliance. They contend that nonalignment should mean neutrality, regardless of circumstances. No one believes that nonsense in this room, I am sure.

Manley then softened the direction he was taking by denying, that "we are surrogates of Socialist bloc power." But, he added, as for those

who are concerned about the fact that there are increasing examples of a coincidence of view between the nonaligned movement and, say, the Socialist group [the Soviet bloc] about matters like liberation struggles, the matter can be simply remedied by the developed countries changing their position and joining us in what would then become a true international consensus.

Now the Socialist International has not, as yet, endorsed the doings of Castro, nor has it officially adopted Manley's eastward course. However, to feature Manley's speech in the SI publication, *Socialist Affairs*, with Manley's picture on the cover, on the eve of a conference on Latin America in Santo Domingo, is an ominous sign of the further deterioration of what was once a democratic movement.

THOMAS R. BROOKS
Brooklyn, New York

Jewish Studies

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review of *Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter-History* by David Biale [Books in Review, November 1979], Hyam Maccoby says that "Jewish studies in the universities are coming under the spell of a 'crude inductivism.'" As a principal exponent of that "crude inductivism" (he could also have said, positivism) characteristic of Jewish studies in universities, and, indeed, of universities, against which Mr. Maccoby wants to represent Gershom Scholem as a bulwark, I want to point to the alternative. It is revealed when Mr. Maccoby criticizes me, as he does in the [London] *Times Literary Supplement*, for not "understanding" that there is historical information available to us *a priori*.

So there it is: *a priori* facts about history, so far as I can make out, are things we are supposed to know even though we have no evidence about them. How we must know them Mr. Maccoby does not tell us. As a crude inductivist, I can only hope that he has access, which I would not want, to the Holy Spirit. The alternative, which I represent, is to try to make sense of facts in our hand and always to remember that what we cannot show we do not know.

Whether or not Scholem will concur in this curiously credulous position, I do not know. Biale's shoddy book does nothing to help us find out. For he persistently ignores what is important about Scholem and to Scholem, which is Scholem's scholarly *oeuvre*: Biale insists that Scholem always means something—anything—but what he actually says. In all, a review by Maccoby of Biale on Scholem has a know-nothing review a know-it-all. Poor Scholem.

JACOB NEUSNER
Department of Religious Studies
Brown University
Providence, Rhode Island

HYAM MACCOBY writes:

Jacob Neusner writes with his customary courtesy. His letter is an excellent expression of the "crude inductivism" of which I complained. I have never asserted the existence of anything so absurd as "*a priori* facts," but have been con-

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cerned to point out that the relation between facts and theory is far more intimate than Mr. Neusner realizes. We do not amass facts which then automatically generate a theory; we form hypotheses at a very early stage of inquiry and our amassing of facts (and even our definition of what is to count as a fact) is directed by our hypothesis (which may of course be discarded in favor of a new hypothesis during the investigation). I can hardly believe that Mr. Neusner has read, or even heard of, the work of writers on scientific method such as Karl Popper and Thomas Kuhn, in view of his simple-minded and outdated notions of "inductivism" and "positivism," which have hardly progressed as far as John Stuart Mill.

This may seem abstract, but it is not, for Mr. Neusner's own investigations have been vitiated by his imperfect grasp of scientific method. He has been so bewitched by his belief in his own theory-free objectivity and self-propelling methodology that he has failed to notice the presuppositions and hidden theories underlying his work. There is no one so much at the mercy of theory as he who thinks that he has no theory.

The directing theory of Mr. Neusner's work on the Talmud is that the Pharisees from Hillel onward were obsessed with the minutiae of ritual observance and with ratiocination about them. The whole areas of ethics, politics, and aesthetics are absent. It is significant that in a recent would-be comprehensive essay on the Talmud, Mr. Neusner scarcely mentions the Aggadah, ethics, politics, or justice. Of course, this accords with the traditional Christian representation of the Pharisees (see Matthew 23: 23-6). But many writers, both Jewish and non-Jewish, from Travers Herford to E. P. Sanders, have combated this picture, and have shown that the Pharisees and the Talmud were indeed much more concerned with "the weightier demands of the Law, justice, mercy, and good faith," than with "tithes of mint and dill and cumin" and "cleaning the outside of cup and dish." All this corrective work is in danger of going for nothing, since Mr. Neusner (widely regarded as an authority) confirms the Christian stereotype. True, Mr. Neusner professes to find spiritual

values in the alleged talmudic obsession with ritual and ratiocination; but these values form a special enclave that does not challenge or rival Christian spiritual values.

The reaction of some Christian scholars to Mr. Neusner shows that they are happy to allow this limited spiritual value to ritual obsessiveness in the interests of confirming the Gospel picture of the Pharisees, and of confining to Christianity an interest in "justice, mercy, and good faith." It is at this cost that Mr. Neusner has been able to free himself from despised "apologetics."

Related to Mr. Neusner's overriding theory is his constant assertion that the conviction of the Pharisees was "that ordinary folk should behave as if they were priests," belonging to table-fellowships concerned with ritual purity. Simple considerations make this view untenable: the table-fellow-

ships were never regarded as obligatory; the degree of ritual purity required for them was lower than that required for priests; backsliders were not regarded as guilty of sacrilege; non-members were regarded with respect. These considerations are hardly mentioned in Mr. Neusner's voluminous writings, which shows how powerful an unexamined dogma can be in the work of an inductivist, self-persuaded that he deals only in "facts."

Theories never happen automatically through the collection of facts; they arise through the faculty of judgment. It is in this faculty (which some might call common sense) that Mr. Neusner is singularly lacking, partly because he does not believe in its existence, partly through mere incapacity. Time after time, he gets hold of the wrong end of the stick. Often he makes curious factual howlers (some of these were pointed out

by the late Solomon Zeitlin, but there are many more).

Gershom Scholem has always recognized the role of theory in scientific inquiry. Consequently, he has never confused his own theories with facts, and has shown a flexibility that contrasts with Jacob Neusner's rigidity and pose of infallibility.

Correction

A typographical error occurred on p. 73 of Samuel Lipman's article, "The Russian Wave" [Music, February]. In the first column, the last sentence of the third paragraph should read: "And as with all these Russian artists, the choice of familiar program material—the Beethoven Sonata opus 30, no. 3, the Bach C-major unaccompanied Sonata, the Brahms Sonata in D-minor, and three Hungarian Dances—only concentrated maximum and unflattering attention on the soloist."—Ed.

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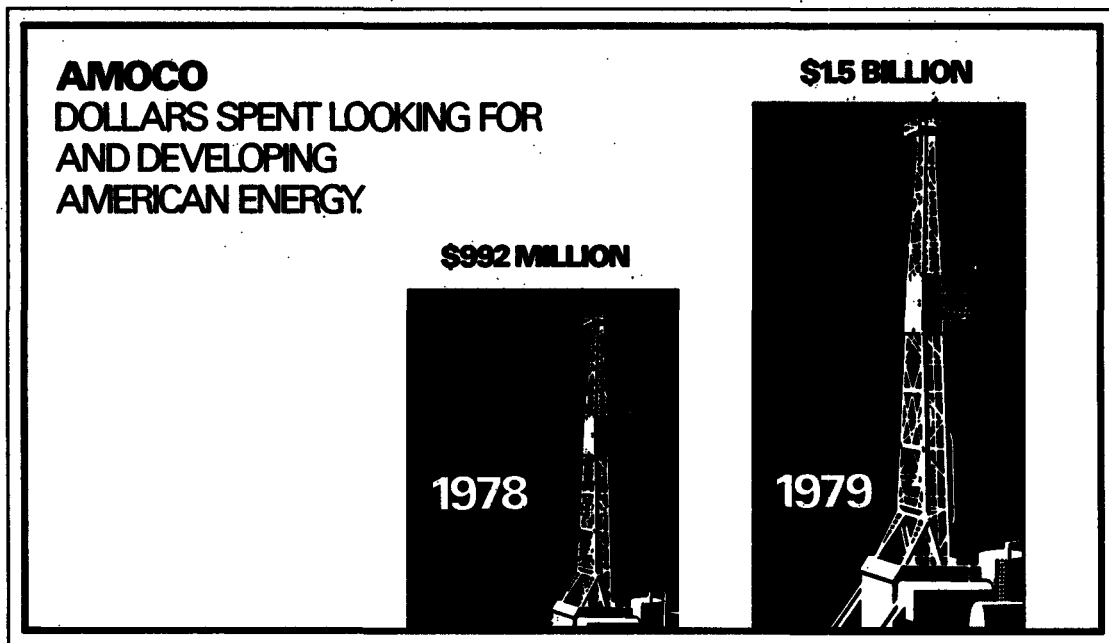
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The Present Danger

Norman Podhoretz

ON NOVEMBER 4, 1979, the day the American embassy in Teheran was seized and the hostages were taken, one period in American history ended; and less than two months later, on December 25, when Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan, another period began.

The past being easier to read than the present, we can describe the nature of the age now over with greater assurance than the one into which we are at this very moment just setting a hesitant and uncertain foot. Yet even to recognize whence we have come, let alone whither we are going, will require an effort to clear our minds of the cant that prevented an earlier understanding of the terrible troubles into which we were heading. I propose that we start, then, by renouncing the general idea that before Iran and Afghanistan we had moved from "cold war" to "détente" and that the old political struggle between "East" and "West" was yielding in importance to a new economic conflict between "North" and "South."

The assumptions behind this scheme have all been shattered by the events of the past few months, but they have served so well and for so long to disguise and deny the ominous consequences of a tilt in the balance of power from the United States to the Soviet Union that a fierce effort is being made to rescue them from discredit. If that effort should succeed, more would be lost than intellectual clarity. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that it would signify the final collapse of an American resolve to resist the forward surge of Soviet imperialism. In that case, we would know by what name to call the new era into which we have entered (though it would be an essential feature of that era that we would be forbidden to speak its name aloud): the Finlandization of America.

THE period usually called the cold war began in 1947 when the United States, after several years of acquiescence in the expansion of the Soviet empire, decided to resist any further advance either in the form of military invasion by Soviet troops or political subversion by local Communist parties.

Up until this point the Russians had enjoyed a free hand. They had been permitted to occupy most of Eastern Europe and to begin installing puppet regimes in one after another of the countries of the region. Now with Greece and Turkey threatened by the same fate, the United States finally began rousing itself from the semi-euphoric and semi-torpid state into which it had fallen at the end of World War II. In March 1947, announcing a program of military aid to Greece and Turkey, President Truman, in the doctrine soon to bear his name, declared that "it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure."

Within the next few months, the Marshall Plan was launched to aid in the reconstruction of the war-torn economies of Western Europe. Then came a Communist coup in Czechoslovakia which destroyed the independence of another East European country and the only one with a democratic political system. Partly in response to a similar danger posed to Italy and France by huge local Communist parties subservient to Moscow, and partly to guard against an actual Soviet invasion of Western Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO) was formed.

The name given to this two-sided politico-military strategy of American resistance to Soviet imperialism was containment, and it remained the guiding principle of American foreign policy until it was replaced two decades later, in 1969, by a new policy and a new presidential doctrine bearing the name of Richard Nixon.

In one of the Orwellian inversions at which Soviet propaganda has always been so adept, this strategy of resistance, of holding a defensive line against their own imperialistic ambitions, the Russians described and stigmatized (in the words of *The Soviet Diplomatic Dictionary*) as a declaration of war by "the United States and . . . the imperialist military blocs" on "the Soviet Union and other Socialist States after the Second World War."

From that moment to this, any and every lowering of American resistance to Soviet imperialism has been praised by the Russians as a move away from the "cold war," and any sign of a reawakened concern, let alone of concrete action, has been denounced as a "return to the cold war." Thanks to

NORMAN PODHORETZ is the editor of COMMENTARY. His latest book, *Breaking Ranks: A Political Memoir*, was recently published by Harper & Row and an earlier book, *Making It*, will be reissued in paperback in May.

the process of what Daniel P. Moynihan has called "semantic infiltration," this Orwellian use of the term cold war has come into currency in the United States and the West generally. The first thing to do, then, in the interests of clarity, is to discard it in favor of "containment" when we talk about the role played by the United States in the first act of the great historical drama which opened in 1947.

ALTHOUGH it was in the Truman Doctrine that the policy of containment was officially enunciated, it received its most authoritative expression in an article published in the July 1947 issue of *Foreign Affairs* under the title "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." The author, identified at the time as "Mr. X," was George F. Kennan, the first director of the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department. About thirty years later, in what was perhaps the most dramatic single case of the loss of faith in containment caused by the experience of Vietnam, Kennan for all practical purposes repudiated the position he had taken in this article. Like many others of his generation, the great theorist of containment became what he himself called, with a candor few of the others had the courage or the audacity to match, a "semi-isolationist." But even to Kennan's admirable candor on these momentous issues there were limits. Thus he suggested that it was not so much that he had changed his mind about containment, as that his conception of it had been distorted in practice by an excessive emphasis on the military component of a strategy that he had envisaged as primarily political.

Yet anyone who reads "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" today is unlikely to come away with the impression that Kennan meant to stress the political over the military. His two main points, made not once but several times, are that the Soviet Union is embarked on a long-range strategy to overthrow the societies of the capitalist world and replace them with Communist regimes, and that this aim can only be frustrated by an equally determined strategy of resistance. Thus "the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies." Or again: "... the Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the Western world is something that can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy, but which cannot be charmed or talked out of existence."

No doubt the "counter-force" Kennan had in mind was not exclusively military in nature. But there can be even less doubt that the American interventions into Korea and Vietnam were entirely consistent with his formulations. In fact, when we add to them the statement that the duty of "all

good Communists" everywhere in the world "is the support and promotion of Soviet power, as defined in Moscow," we have to conclude that, in principle at least, Kennan's conception of containment imposed a *prima-facie* requirement on the United States to use military force in Korea and Vietnam. For on his view, in each of these cases an effort was being made to expand Soviet power through the expansion of Communist regimes serving Moscow's long-range purposes. That greater practical wisdom or tactical prudence would have counseled nonintervention into Vietnam—on the ground that the chances of success were so slight—says nothing about the principle, or about its applicability to situations where the local conditions might be more favorable to military action. Korea itself was the classic example of such a situation, and a test-case of the seriousness of containment.

In the years between the enunciation of the policy and the outbreak of the Korean war, the United States had given containment concrete expression in the formation of NATO, and in a variety of actions designed to deter any advance of Soviet power beyond the lines established at the end of World War II and thus far crossed only by the coup in Czechoslovakia (for which, perhaps, the defection of Communist Yugoslavia was regarded as an even trade). At first there had been opposition to the new policy from the Left as well as the Right. On the Left, the argument was that the Soviet Union—in contrast to what the theory of containment supposed—was pursuing a defensive rather than an aggressive policy, and that Stalin wanted only security and peace. On the Right, the theory of Soviet intentions lying behind containment was accepted, but the prescription for American policy was attacked as overly defensive. Whereas the Left advocated disarmament and "understanding," the Right demanded "rollback" and liberation. It was not enough to hold out the hope, as Kennan did, of promoting "tendencies which must eventually find their outlet in either the breakup or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power"; the East European satellites had to be helped to rise up and rebel against their Soviet masters.

Yet neither of these two opposing assaults on containment could make much headway in the early years. The left-wing attack organized itself in Henry Wallace's campaign for the Presidency in 1948 and was so badly humiliated at the polls (Wallace receiving not the ten million votes he had expected but fewer than a million) that it sank into oblivion as a political force. In the world of ideas, too, the benign interpretation of Soviet intentions suffered a severe pounding at the hands of critics who could point both to Soviet doctrine and to Soviet action in refuting the view that Stalin was interested only in security and peace.

As for the attack from the Right, it turned out to be more rhetorical than real. Thus when—encouraged by a Republican administration in which

John Foster Dulles and Richard Nixon, two of the leading critics of containment from the Right, served in high positions—the Hungarians rose up against their Soviet masters, the United States looked on sympathetically but took no action.

The Korean war had also broken out as a result of American encouragement. In that case, however, it was the Communists we encouraged, in the form of an announcement by Secretary of State Dean Acheson seeming to suggest that the defense of South Korea was not a vital American interest. Whether Acheson thus misled the Soviet Union and its North Korean clients by inadvertence, or whether the United States changed its mind at the sight of Communist troops actually invading a non-Communist nation, the American decision to hold the line against any further expansion of Soviet or Communist power was virtually unhesitant. We went to war; and in doing so we demonstrated in unmistakable terms that we were serious about the “application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy”—that is, about containment.

At the same time, the way we fought the war in Korea became a first clear indication that the critics of containment from the Right—for all that they seemed to have one of the two major parties behind them—were to be no more influential in the shaping of American policy than the critics on the Left. In refusing to do more in Korea than repel the North Korean invasion—in refusing, that is, to conquer North Korea as the commanding general, Douglas MacArthur, and his supporters on the Right wanted to do—the United States under Truman served notice on the world that it had no intention of going beyond containment to rollback or liberation.

Any lingering doubt as to whether this was the policy of the United States rather than the policy of the Democratic party was removed when the Republicans came into office in 1952 under Eisenhower. Far from adopting a bolder or more aggressive strategy, the new President ended the Korean war on the basis of the status quo ante—in other words, precisely on the terms of containment. And when, three years later, he refrained from going into Hungary, he made it correlatively clear that while the United States would resist the expansion of Soviet power by any and every means up to and including war, it would do nothing—not even provide aid to colonies of the Soviet empire seeking national independence and wishing to throw in their political lot with the democratic world—to shrink the territorial dimensions of Soviet control.

IN REALITY, if not entirely in rhetoric, then, there was a bipartisan consensus behind the policy of containment as outlined by Kennan in “The Sources of Soviet Conduct.” But even putting it that way understates the case. The fact is that there was a *national* consensus which

went deeper than the realm of electoral politics. Nor did this consensus express itself only in the negative terms of a weakening of the critics of containment from the Left and the Right. There was a positive dimension, caught by Kennan in the peroration of his article with an eloquent flourish that fully matched the magisterial brilliance of the analysis on which it rested:

The thoughtful observer of Russian-American relations will find no cause for complaint in the Kremlin's challenge to American society. He will rather experience a certain gratitude for a Providence which, by providing the American people with this implacable challenge, has made their entire security as a nation dependent on their pulling themselves together and accepting the responsibilities of moral and political leadership that history plainly intended them to bear.

In “pulling themselves together” precisely for these reasons and in this way, the American people experienced a surge of self-confident energy. Instead of the depression which had been expected in the postwar years, there was unprecedented prosperity, and its fruits were being more widely shared than anyone had ever dreamed possible. Millions upon millions of people with low expectations of life found themselves being offered opportunities to improve their lot: in response they worked, they produced, they built, they bred. Even many intellectuals—so recently “alienated” and marginal—joined in what was petulantly derided by the few remaining socialists among them as the “celebration” of America. Yet far from resulting in a diminution of creativity, this new ethos generated a more exciting literature than the 30's before it or the 60's that would follow. (I think of the emergence in the 50's of such writers who shared in the newly positive attitude toward American society as Saul Bellow, Ralph Ellison, William Styron, Robert Lowell, John Berryman, Lionel Trilling, Reinhold Niebuhr, Hannah Arendt, and George Kennan himself.)

In addition to “pulling themselves together” in this way, the American people also realized Kennan's hope that they would accept “the responsibilities of moral and political leadership that history plainly intended them to bear.” They accepted these responsibilities by supporting the Marshall Plan, possibly the most generous program of economic aid the world had ever seen, and by their willingness to pay the price in blood and treasure of policies designed to hold the line against a totalitarian system which had already destroyed any possibility of freedom in large areas of the globe and aimed to extend its barbarous reign over as much of the rest as it could. For this too they were rewarded by an upsurge of pride and self-confidence. It was a nation that believed itself capable of assuming leadership in the cause of defending freedom against the threat of totalitarianism. By the end of the decade, when John F. Kennedy succeeded Eisenhower as President, only a

small minority of people on the Left doubted that the cause was just or that the will and the means to fight for it were there.

SO MANY Democrats, including the vast majority who served in the upper echelons of the Kennedy administration, have by now repudiated or quietly drifted away from their earlier views that it seems necessary to stress what would otherwise be self-evident about the Kennedy administration: that it was, if anything, more zealous in its commitment to containment than the Eisenhower administration had been. Kennedy ran against his Republican opponent Nixon, who had of course served as Eisenhower's Vice President, on a platform charging that the Republicans had neglected our defenses (allowing a "missile gap" to develop between the United States and the Soviet Union) and that they were, moreover, softer on Communism than he was. (Nixon later came to believe that a major factor in his narrow defeat was Kennedy's success in establishing this point—improbable though it may sound to the ears of a later generation that knew not John—during one of their television debates.)

Once in office, Kennedy and his Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara took immediate steps to move away from the Republican strategic doctrine of "massive retaliation"—according to which the United States would respond to any act of Communist aggression with a nuclear strike against the Soviet Union—toward a more flexible posture. As early as 1950 a group of professors from Harvard and MIT (including future members of the Kennedy administration like McGeorge Bundy, Carl Kaysen, Jerome Wiesner, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and John Kenneth Galbraith) had warned that the emphasis on nuclear weapons "provided the United States with no effective answer to limited aggression except the wholly disproportionate answer of atomic war. As a result it invited Moscow to use the weapons of guerrilla warfare and internal revolt in marginal areas in the confidence that such local activity would incur only local risks." Kennedy himself picked up this theme eight years later, and his call as a Senator for a military posture that could respond to such threats as "limited brushfire wars, indirect non-overt aggression, intimidation and subversion, internal revolution," he answered with his policies as President. Among those policies were the attempted invasion of Cuba in the Bay of Pigs and the decision to send American "advisers" and then actual troops into Vietnam.

Although a universally acknowledged disaster, the Bay of Pigs did little to discredit the strategy of containment in general. It was taken as a great tactical blunder and written off as an unfortunate but perhaps necessary stage in the education of a new and inexperienced President.

The decision to go into Vietnam, however, was to have much more radical consequences. In prin-

ciple, to repeat the point once again, this decision was unremarkable. It followed upon the precedent of Korea in the sense that Vietnam too was a country partitioned into Communist and non-Communist areas and where the Communists were trying to take over the non-Communists by force. The difference was that whereas in Korea the North had invaded the South with regular troops, in Vietnam the aggression was taking the form of an apparently internal rebellion by a Communist faction. Very few people in the United States believed that the war in Vietnam was a civil war, but even if they had, it would have made little difference. For whatever the legalistic definition of the case might be, there was no question that an effort was being mounted in Vietnam to extend Communist power beyond an already established line. As such, it represented no less clear a challenge to containment than Korea.

The question, then, was not whether the United States ought to respond; the only question was whether the United States had the means to do so effectively. But given the fact that the new strategic doctrine of the Kennedy administration had been conceived precisely for the purpose of meeting just such a challenge ("indirect non-overt aggression, intimidation and subversion, internal revolution"), it was all but inevitable that Kennedy's answer should be yes. The only dissent from this answer within his administration came from those who argued that military measures would fail unless we also forced the South Vietnamese government to undertake programs of liberal reform. But this argument implicitly called for a greater degree of American intervention than the dispatch of troops alone (and led eventually to the assassination of Diem and the assumption of complete American responsibility for the war).

A CASE might have been made—and indeed was made, by Hans J. Morgenthau, among others, outside the administration itself—against American intervention into Vietnam on the ground that the chances of success were too slight and the consequences of failure too great. As Morgenthau saw it, there was nothing wrong with trying to save South Vietnam from Communism, let alone with the strategy of containment in general; what was wrong was the tactical judgment, the attempt to apply a sound policy in an inappropriate and unfavorable situation. Morgenthau added that if we allowed ourselves to get dragged into an interminable war in South Vietnam—which we would be unable to win in any case—it would have the same kind of divisive effects on our society as the Algerian war had had on the French. The interests at stake in Southeast Asia were simply not vital enough to justify the risk.

Sound, and even irrefutable, as this analysis seems in retrospect, it commanded very little assent in official Washington. There the prevailing

conviction was that we now had the kinds of counterinsurgency forces required to save South Vietnam from Communism, and there was also what can only be called an itch to test out the new techniques.

But if the only question raised by Vietnam in the early days was the tactical one of whether it was possible for intervention to succeed, more fundamental questions began to be raised as the war dragged on. Whether or not the intervention could succeed, was it necessary or desirable? One of the main assumptions behind containment was that any advance of Communist power amounted to an expansion of Soviet power, but was that necessarily true? Might this not be a case of Chinese expansionism? If so, given the ever widening rift between the Russians and the Chinese, in what sense did American resistance fall under the imperative of containing Soviet expansionism? And if we were now faced with a separate problem of Chinese expansionism, was a mechanical application of the same strategy we had developed to counter the Soviet imperial thrust the best way to deal with it? Or again: might the war in Vietnam actually be an internal Vietnamese affair—a case of covert aggression from the North with local purposes of its own (the unification of the country, and perhaps domination of the whole region, by Hanoi) having little to do with either Soviet or Chinese power? Or, finally, might it be an entirely internal *South* Vietnamese affair—a civil war of real significance to no one but the people of that country?

Obviously the rationale for American intervention into Vietnam depended on clear answers to such questions. Yet they were never forthcoming. Or rather, the ground of our policy kept shifting as the years wore on. First we were countering Soviet expansionism, then we were drawing a line in Asia against Chinese expansionism similar to the one we had drawn in Europe against the Russians, then we were fighting to preserve the independence of a friendly country which had been invaded by another, and finally we were preserving the credibility of our commitments to allies in other parts of the world.

In short, to the casualties in blood of the Vietnam war was added another casualty—the loss of clarity which had marked the policy of the United States for twenty years through Democratic and Republican administrations alike.

Nor was this the only wound suffered by containment in Vietnam. There was also a loss of confidence in the ability of the United States to discharge “the responsibilities of moral and political leadership.” In saying that “history plainly intended” the United States to bear those responsibilities, Kennan (no American chauvinist, to put it mildly) surely had in mind not any inherent virtue in the American character but the predominance of sheer power with which history, working through two world wars that had finally

exhausted the energies of Western Europe, had left the United States. Despite all the talk, friendly or hostile, about American “arrogance” or the “illusion of American omnipotence,” this power was not exercised by Americans as though they thought it was absolute. If they really had entertained any such arrogant illusion of omnipotence, they would surely have refused to tolerate Soviet domination of Eastern Europe or the capture of mainland China by the Communists at a time when America enjoyed a nuclear monopoly. But it would on the other side be foolish to deny that before Vietnam, American confidence in American power was very great—not unlimited but great. Anything within reason we wanted to do we believed we had the power to do. This confidence in American power was the second major casualty of the defeat in Vietnam.

As with power, so with “moral and political leadership.” If at the beginning domestic criticism of our military intervention into Vietnam was restricted to tactical issues, and if toward the middle the political wisdom of the intervention came into very serious question, by the end the moral character of the United States was being indicted and besmirched. Large numbers of Americans, including even many of the people who had led the intervention in the Kennedy years, were now joining the tiny minority on the Left who had at the time denounced them for stupidity and immorality, and were now saying that going into Vietnam had progressed from a folly to a crime. No greater distance could have been traveled from the original spirit of containment, reaffirmed in such ringing tones in John F. Kennedy’s inaugural address (“Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty”), than to this new national mood of self-doubt and self-disgust. The domestic base on which containment had rested was gone.

IT WAS in response to this new political reality that a Republican administration, coming into office under Richard Nixon a little more than twenty years after containment was first enunciated, decided to begin moving away from it and toward a new international role for the United States. In a process not unfamiliar to other countries and other conservative leaders (France under de Gaulle, Israel under Begin), Nixon, who had once denounced containment as “cowardly” and would in the past have been expected to abandon it if at all in favor of a more aggressive stance, moved instead in the other direction—toward withdrawal, retrenchment, disengagement.

As getting into Vietnam had served under Kennedy and Johnson to discredit the old strategy of containment, getting out of Vietnam would now—so Nixon and his National Security Adviser Hen-

ry Kissinger thought—become the model or paradigm of a new strategy of retreat. American forces were to be withdrawn from Vietnam gradually enough to permit a build-up of South Vietnamese power to the point where the South Vietnamese could assume responsibility for the defense of their own country. The American role would then be limited to supplying the necessary military aid. The same policy, suitably modified according to local circumstances, would be applied to the rest of the world as well. In every major region, the United States would now depend on local surrogates (including Communist China—hence the opening to it—and of course Iran under the Shah) rather than on its own military power to deter or contain any Soviet-sponsored aggression. We would supply arms and other forms of assistance, but from henceforth the deterring and the fighting would be left to others. Thus did the Truman Doctrine give way to the Nixon Doctrine, and containment to strategic retreat.

To be sure, the new policy did not call itself by any such unattractive name as “strategic retreat.” It was called “*détente*” and it was heralded as the beginning of a new era in the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. In this new era, a “structure of peace” would be built, with cooperation between the two superpowers replacing “confrontation.” Negotiations would proceed to limit the proliferation of strategic nuclear weapons; and the Americans and the Russians would also agree to exercise restraint in their dealings with third parties so as to lessen the danger that they might be drawn into direct conflict with each other.

To the critics of “*détente*” it was clear at the time, as it has become clear to almost everyone in retrospect, that the new strategy rested on the highly questionable assumption that the Soviet Union could be contained by any force other than American power. Nixon and Kissinger believed—or perhaps only hoped against hope—that a combination or “linkage” of surrogate force and positive economic and political incentives would be enough to restrain Soviet adventurism; and where this combination proved insufficient, a serious show of American determination would make up the lack.

In other words, in their conception of it, “*détente*” was the highest degree of containment compatible with the post-Vietnam political climate in the United States—a climate in which Congress, supported by the leading centers of opinion within the foreign-policy establishment and the major news media, wanted only to cut back drastically on defense spending and to curtail American commitments abroad to a sparse minimum. Kissinger evidently believed that the United States had suffered a failure of nerve and no longer had the will or the stomach to pursue a serious strategy of containment. He also seems to have believed that the Soviet Union had entered a

period of imperial dynamism. His role, like that of Metternich when confronted with the impending collapse of the monarchical system in the face of a rising democratic challenge, was to delay the inevitable for as long as possible. To win time was desirable in itself and there was in any case a chance that unexpected developments might occur to change the entire picture.

Unfortunately for this conception, the only unexpected developments that actually did occur tended to undermine its viability as a modified strategy of containment. One such development was the failure of what had been the paradigmatic testing-ground of the new strategy in Vietnam, where the new idea of containment through surrogate power followed the old idea of containment through American power into an early grave (though the obsequies were not read until four years later, after the fall of the Shah). In the case of Vietnam, not only was the surrogate power unable to hold the line on its own, but in the event, the United States refused even to provide it with the promised aid to defend itself against a military invasion encouraged and supplied with massive quantities of Soviet arms. To make yet another of the many historical ironies generated by this story still more mordant, the “discredited” theory on which we originally went into Vietnam—that the victory of Communism there would be tantamount to an expansion of Soviet power—was vindicated after many detours in the end, as Communist Vietnam allied itself with the Soviet Union against China and then drove on to extend its rule over the whole of Indochina.

The even more “discredited” domino theory was thereby vindicated too—and not merely in Indochina. No sooner had Vietnam fallen than Soviet proxies in the form of Cuban troops appeared in Angola, and again the United States refused to respond. Kissinger and the new President, Gerald Ford, appealed to Congress for aid to the pro-Western faction in Angola which was being overwhelmed by its Communist rivals with the help of the Cuban troops. But Congress (again supported by the most influential sectors of opinion) said no, and for good measure cut down an effort by the CIA to provide covert assistance to the anti-Communist forces as well. Within the next few years—extending into the new Democratic administration under Jimmy Carter—five more countries were taken over by factions supported by and loyal to the Soviet Union, while the United States looked complacently on and congratulated itself on exercising “mature restraint.”

NOR was this developing pattern of Soviet advance and American retreat confined to conflicts involving clients or allies. More ominously it showed itself in the changing balance between the two superpowers themselves. After being forced by American superiority both in strategic nuclear forces and in naval forces in

place to back down in the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, the Soviet Union had decided that it would never again be placed in such a situation. In line with that decision, the Soviets had embarked on a build-up in every category of military force—nuclear as well as conventional, on land, on sea, and in the air—that would turn out to be the greatest military build-up in the peacetime history of the world. Yet despite all the easy talk, then and now, about an arms race, the United States responded to this relentless marathon not by running but by standing still and even slipping back. Through the entire decade of the 70's, the Soviets spent three times as much as the United States on defense, and in 1979 alone (even after a minor reversal of the steadily downward trend of American military spending from 1970-76) they outstripped the United States by 50 per cent.* In most categories of conventional military force, the Soviet Union had long enjoyed an advantage over the United States, but the balance was maintained by American superiority in the quality of our arsenal and the quantity of our strategic nuclear weapons. Yet Soviet advances in both quality and quantity were combining with American "restraint" (a word which more and more took on the character of a euphemism for unilateral disarmament) to wipe out that advantage.

As the critics of détente began pointing out with mounting alarm, if these tendencies were to continue, the overall balance of power between the Soviet Union and the United States would shift in favor of the Soviets. And as the Soviets themselves began pointing out with scarcely concealed glee, such a shift would be translated into a greater measure of Soviet "influence" everywhere in the world. Influence could mean throwing their weight around politically in negotiations with the West; it could mean intimidating other countries by menacing shows of force; it could mean dispatching Cuban and East German proxies to intervene in Third World countries without fear of opposition or reprisal; it could—though this would come as a surprise even to those who expected the worst of the Soviet Union but who were aware of its almost legendary caution in sending its own troops outside the boundaries of its own empire—mean outright Soviet military invasion and occupation; and, in the worst case, it could mean the kind of political control over Western Europe, Japan, and ultimately even the United States that had come to be known as Finlandization.

Far from expressing concern over the changing balance of power between the United States and the Soviet Union or from worrying about the consequences it could and was indeed already beginning to have, the Carter administration seemed sanguine about it. In an obverse replay of what happened with containment when Eisenhower replaced Truman in 1952, the new Democratic administration which came into office behind Carter in 1976 continued and even accelerated the strate-

gic retreat begun under the Republicans. Carter, who had campaigned against a putatively bloated defense budget and promised to cut defense spending by \$5 to \$7 billion, found it impossible to keep that promise as President. He did, however, cancel or delay production of one new weapons system after another—the B-1 bomber, the neutron bomb, the MX, the Trident—while the Soviet Union went on increasing and refining its entire arsenal.

Nor was any great alarm sounded by the Carter administration over the escalation of activity by Soviet proxies in the Middle East and Africa. To many observers all this activity seemed part of a developing strategy to put the Soviets into a position of control over the oil of the Middle East or at least over the routes through which it was transported to Europe, Japan, and the United States. But to Carter's ambassador to the UN—perhaps reasoning by analogy with the notion that Soviet achievement of nuclear parity was a necessary precondition for stabilizing the "arms race"—Cuban troops in Africa were a force for stability. As for the fear of Soviet encirclement of the Middle East, it was dismissed as paranoia by spokesmen both in the government and in the press.

BUT if in general terms the pre-Afghanistan policies of the Carter administration were continuous with the strategy of retreat inaugurated by the two Republican administrations preceding it, there was also a major difference in conception and attitude. Whereas Nixon, Ford, and Kissinger saw détente as an adaptation of containment to a set of changing circumstances—the best, in effect, one could now hope to do—the Carter administration seemed to see no need for containment at all.

Although Kissinger had on occasion flirted with the notion that the Soviet Union was becoming a "status-quo power," his net assessment was that it had entered a period of imperial expansionism. With the Carter administration, it was just the opposite. The President or his National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski might point in an extremity to Soviet misbehavior. But in statement after statement by the President himself, his Secretary of State, his ambassador to the UN, his leading expert on Soviet affairs, and his apologists in the universities and the press, the American people were told that the Soviet Union was pursuing the same objectives as we were—stability and peace.

To be sure—so this reading of the Soviets went—they were still primitive enough to think that military power was as important as it had been in the past. But with patient instruction from us—reinforced by lessons like their expulsion from Egypt—they would soon learn that the world had entered a new era in which military power was becoming

* These figures are based on a CIA report. It is worth noting that CIA estimates of Soviet military spending have usually been found to be too low, not too high.

less and less useful as an instrument of policy. In the nuclear field, strategic superiority (as Henry Kissinger himself had said—though he would later change his mind) was meaningless, and if the Soviets should remain so immature as to try to achieve it, they would gain nothing for their pains but economic hardship. As for sending their proxies into other countries, they would soon find that this too was a species of anachronistic activity. For not all the Cuban troops or Soviet weapons in the world could prevail against the force of nationalism which would bog them down in quagmires and then extrude them altogether, as had happened to us in our own foolish turn in Vietnam.

UNDERLYING all these considerations was the idea that the East-West conflict—the struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union—was becoming obsolescent and that a new axis of conflict was being drawn between the North and the South. The issues in this new conflict were not political—that is, they did not involve a struggle between Communism and democracy; they were, rather, economic, pitting the poor nations of the South against the developed countries of the North. Just as dozens of formerly subjugated peoples had demanded their political place in the sun and achieved it by becoming sovereign nations, so these same peoples and others too were now demanding their rightful share of the goods of the earth through the creation of a new international economic order. Such demands could not be resisted by force—which was another proof of the growing obsolescence of military might—and the problem was still further complicated by the fact that not all the economic power was in the hands of the North.

These propositions had been given a tremendous boost toward the status of axiomatic truth by the success of OPEC in imposing an embargo on sales to the West during the Yom Kippur war of 1973 and then in quadrupling the price of oil overnight. It was not, however, until the Carter administration took office three years later that they achieved the status of official American policy. In his now notorious speech at Notre Dame in May 1977, the President said that the “threat of conflict with the Soviet Union has become less intensive” and that the greater threat to peace came from a world “one-third rich and two-thirds hungry.”

The upshot was that there was no longer any need for containment—whether in the Trumanesque form of American military power or in the Nixonian modification of local surrogates supported by American arms. As Carter himself put it, “Historical trends have weakened the foundation” of the two principles which guided our foreign policy in the past: “a belief that Soviet expansion was almost inevitable and that it must be contained.”

Given this way of looking at the world, it was only to be expected that the Carter administration

would react with “mature restraint” to the overthrow of the Shah of Iran. In the Notre Dame speech the President had said:

Being confident of our own future, we are now free of that inordinate fear of Communism which once led us to embrace any dictator who joined us in that fear. I'm glad that's being changed.

The Shah being a prime example of just such a dictator, he might well have seen the writing on the wall in these words, especially when to their moral disapproval was added the idea of the obsolescence of containment even in the milder form of the Nixon Doctrine—which had made of the Shah a “pillar” of American security in the Persian Gulf. If the Nixon Doctrine had remained in force, it would have called upon us to support the Shah in doing whatever was necessary to stave off a revolution which might or might not have been pro-Soviet but was certainly anti-American. Whether even Richard Nixon himself would have had the stomach and the political base for such a policy—involving, as it would have done, American acquiescence in the massacre by Iranian troops of many thousands of demonstrators—is open to serious doubt. In any case, Richard Nixon was gone, and the doctrine bearing his name was not about to be rescued by a President who saw no need for it and even seems to have thought that the United States would be better off without allies like the Shah.

IN THIS, however, the President was lagging behind a new stirring in the public mind. Even some of his academic sympathizers were disturbed by the fall of the Shah and the rise of the Ayatollah. This strange new force was not the kind of thing the opponents of the Shah in the United States had counted on. Andrew Young and Ramsey Clark might praise the Ayatollah as a saint and a great believer in human rights, but most people were unsettled by his violent outbursts against the United States and his evident determination to take Iran not forward into the future but backward into a past darker from their point of view than the regime of the Shah. And there were those who, while priding themselves on being as free of the inordinate fear of Communism as anyone in the Carter White House, nevertheless began wondering if the Islamic revolution in Iran might turn out to be the prelude to a Soviet takeover of some kind. In any event, it was now acknowledged by sympathetic critics of the Carter administration like Stanley Hoffmann of Harvard and James Chace of *Foreign Affairs* that there could be no substitute for American power in the Persian Gulf or perhaps anywhere else. Either we would have to depend on our own power to hold the Soviets back, or we would have to rely on the hope that they would be contained by their own prudence and by their fear of local resistance.

BUT if the Nixon Doctrine collapsed along with its pillar, the Shah, the twin pillars of Carter's foreign policy were soon to collapse as well, one of them onto the same rubble heap in the streets of Teheran, and the other smashed by Soviet tanks in the streets of Kabul.

The first of these pillars was the idea that no great risk was entailed by the retrenchment of American power. In the new order of things, according to this idea, we could afford to divest ourselves of instrumentalities like a covert capability for intervention by the CIA and a rapid deployment force. Within days after the hostages had been seized in Teheran, the humiliating helplessness of the United States had led even some public figures who formerly favored a radical retrenchment to demand a restoration of these capabilities.

But there was another, subtler aspect to this issue which had to do not with the the availability of particular instruments of force but with the post-Vietnam American reluctance to use force at all. Here too an element of continuity between the Carter administration and the Nixon-Ford-Kissinger years was concealed amid all the differences both rhetorical and real. Thus the failure of the United States to take military action against OPEC in 1973-74 marked the beginning of a period in which militarily powerless parties were able without fear of retaliation to commit what would certainly in the past—even in the very recent past—have been regarded as acts of aggression and even war against the United States. It would be hard to prove that the Iranians who jeered at the impotence of the United States in 1979 had been emboldened by the message of American behavior in 1973. But it is harder still to believe that American passivity in the face of a threat to the very life-blood of its civilization did not lead to the obvious conclusion that the United States had lost its nerve and could now be taken on with impunity. For if the United States was not prepared to use force to insure its access to oil, for the sake of what could it be expected to do so?

The form in which this point came home to American public opinion was the contrast between the attack on our embassy in Teheran and the protection afforded the Soviet embassy there when a group of protesters tried to storm it after the invasion of Afghanistan. How was it, many people began to ask, that our embassies were sacked, and not only in Teheran, whereas Soviet embassies remained inviolate? Might it have something to do with a fear of Soviet retaliation as against the expectation that the United States would go to any lengths to avoid the use of force? Once the hostages were taken, there might be no way of getting them out safely by military action. But a vast number of Americans were now confirmed in or converted to the view that only the certain knowledge of retaliation could deter others from attempting the same thing again, and that only military power and the willingness to use it could prevent still

others from aggressing in still other ways against the United States.

No sooner did its assumption concerning the utility of American military power collapse than the Carter administration found its ideas about the efficacy of Soviet military power disintegrating too. The President himself had only recently said that the negative effects of Soviet racism and atheism would lead of their own unaided weight to the defeat of Soviet aims in Africa, but the Russians evidently disagreed. They seemed to believe—on the basis of their experience in Hungary and Czechoslovakia—that such effects could be countered well enough by troops and tanks and planes both in Africa and in the Middle East.

Nor could the Carter administration take much comfort from the expectation of some of its supporters and apologists that Afghanistan would become a "quagmire" and soon administer the same lesson to the obdurate Soviets about the uselessness of military power that we had learned in Vietnam. There was no free public opinion in the Soviet Union to interfere with any military operation; there was no outside force supplying the kind of arms to the Afghan rebels that the Soviets themselves had given to the North Vietnamese and without which the "lesson" could never have been taught to the United States.

BUT the invasion of Afghanistan did more than destroy the administration's old ideas about the utility of force in Soviet dealings with the Third World. It shook the very foundation of the administration's conception of the Soviet Union in general. No matter how this extraordinary move was interpreted, it was not easily compatible with the notion that the Soviet Union had become a status-quo power. Even if, as some desperately reassuring voices maintained, the Russians were acting defensively—fearful of what would happen if a Muslim insurgency should overthrow a client state on their own border—there was no denying that the sending of Soviet—not Cuban or East German but Soviet—troops to a country outside the Warsaw Pact represented a new stage of Soviet expansionism.

Nor could it be denied that the decision to risk political and possibly other forms of retaliation bespoke a new level of Soviet boldness. For again, even if it were true, as the reassuring voices maintained, that the Soviets had underestimated the degree of outrage the invasion would provoke both in the United States and in the Third World, they certainly must have known that there would be *some* degree of outrage.

In either case, the invasion could not be reconciled with the idea of the Soviet Union as highly prudent in its international conduct. Or rather, it could best be reconciled with this idea in the opposite sense from what the reassuring voices intended. That is, given the normal reluctance of the Soviets to take undue risks, and given also their

belief—often reiterated by Brezhnev—that as the “relationship of forces” tipped in their favor, they would be entitled to a proportionate extension of their power and influence, the invasion of Afghanistan could only be seen as a vindication of those critics of détente who had been warning since the early 70’s that the retreat of American power would open the way to Soviet adventurism and expansionism.

Finally, the invasion of Afghanistan persuaded the Carter administration that “North-South” had not yet quite replaced “East-West” as the central axis of conflict in our time. This idea had in any case always been dubious, smacking of a great desire to escape from the responsibilities of containment by proclaiming that there was no longer any need to exercise them. Moreover, even the distinction between East-West and North-South had always been problematic.

First of all, in its conflicts with the “South,” the United States always had to worry about the possibility of a confrontation with the military might of the “East.” This was true in 1973, when the last polemical resort against a forcible American takeover of the oil fields was the argument that the Russians might move in to prevent it; and it was true later in Africa, where, for example, the case against American backing of Bishop Abel Muzorewa in Zimbabwe Rhodesia was that such a policy might drag us into a war with the Cubans.

Secondly, despite protestations of neutrality, much of the “South” was for all practical purposes on the side of the “East” against the West. In their meeting in Havana last year, for example, the “nonaligned” nations passed a series of viciously anti-American resolutions and came close to following Cuba’s lead into an alliance with the Soviet bloc—this after three years of punctilious nonintervention and positive wooing by the “imperialistic” United States while Cuban and East German troops and Soviet military advisers were busily absorbing countries throughout the “South” into the “East” by force.

That the ultimate objective of all this Soviet-inspired and -sponsored activity was extension of control by the “East” over that part of the “South” located in the Persian Gulf in order to gain political domination over the “West” (known for purposes of economics as the “North”), and also to insure a source of oil for themselves as their own supplies began to dwindle, seemed clear to many observers long before the invasion of Afghanistan. But it only became clear to the President of the United States after the invasion of Afghanistan. It was then that Carter declared that “An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the U.S.” and that “It will be repelled by use of any means necessary, including military force.”

Ten years after it was first proclaimed, then, the Nixon Doctrine gave way to the Carter Doc-

trine—a new version, or so it seemed, of the Truman Doctrine of old. If the President could be believed, the period of strategic retreat was over and a new period of containment had begun.

AND so we come to the present moment and to the question of whether the President can be believed. The reasons for being skeptical are clear. The President himself is so recent a convert to these new ideas that doubts inevitably arise as to the seriousness of his commitment and his steadiness of purpose. Some ungenerous critics have wondered at whom the Carter Doctrine is really aimed: at the Soviet Union or at the American voters in an election year? Others have asked how the new policy can be effectively implemented by an administration still made up of the same people who until yesterday were pressing in a very different direction.

Yet even if such unkind speculations are dismissed and even if the President is given the benefit of every doubt, a far more ominous question arises. *Is it too late?*

For a long time now, groups like the Coalition for a Democratic Majority and the Committee on the Present Danger have been sounding the alarm over the deterioration of our defenses and the build-up of Soviet military capability. They have warned that these trends, if not reversed, would lead to the opening of a “window of opportunity” for the Soviet Union—a period in which military superiority would embolden the Soviets to move forward quickly, before the United States could correct the imbalance and slam the window shut. The date at which this window would open was generally estimated—with Orwell as an unconscious guide?—to be 1984. But the invasion of Afghanistan may mean that the Soviets think the window is open *now*.

If they do, they have every incentive to keep going—with their own troops, or by encouraging internal insurrections and coups, or by some combination of both—until they have the oil. Even the steps toward mobilization now announced by President Carter—increases in military spending, registration for the draft, and the like—might paradoxically strengthen their incentive to press on now, before we can pull ourselves together and shut the window again. This is the point to which ten years of retreat may have brought us: damned if we do, and damned if we don’t.

In short, the “arms race” we have allegedly been running has now left the United States with virtually no means other than a threat of nuclear war to protect the life-line and the life-blood of our civilization. From everything we know about the Soviets, they will be deterred by that threat so long as the nuclear balance is even or in our favor. This is why the contention, advanced by Senator Kennedy among others, that “nuclear weapons like the MX” have no “relevance” to a “regional crisis” (1) like Afghanistan is dangerously wrong.

If it is not already too late, and if we do get safely through the present crisis, we will only be delaying the inevitable unless we resolve now to use the additional time not only to restore our conventional capability but precisely to spend "the many billions more in defense systems" opposed by Kennedy but which alone can prevent the Soviets from achieving nuclear superiority and thus an unobstructed road to domination. The MX may or may not be the best such system we can buy, but there can be no question that at the very least we will need some new system—possibly the ABM—to make our Minuteman force invulnerable to a Soviet first strike.

It MAY, as I say, already be too late. The Soviets may think that the nuclear balance has now tipped in their favor. Or they may think that the parity which we have deliberately permitted them to achieve over the past fifteen years (on the theory that it would satisfy them and lessen the danger of war), has deprived the American nuclear threat of credibility. If so, the superiority of their conventional forces to ours means that there is nothing to stop them now from advancing but the "Arab nationalism and the Muslim religious feeling" on which Senator Kennedy—like President Carter in his pre-Afghanistan political incarnation—places his hopes. Yet the example of Afghanistan itself, where fierce nationalism and Muslim religious feeling have not exactly proved effective as "a powerful force against Soviet ambition," suggests that this is a frail reed indeed for us to lean upon.

Even if the Soviets should decide for one reason or another to pause, the great peril we are in will not disappear. If, for example, they should launch the "spring peace offensive" that many expect, there is a danger that the finally aroused American giant will once again be lulled back to sleep. In that case, the Carter Doctrine could turn out to be nothing more than an insubstantial election-year slogan, and the nascent new effort of resistance to Soviet imperialism might be cut off in its infancy: the extra billions for defense would be cancelled, and neither the MX nor any other such "irrelevant" system would be built. Meanwhile the Soviets would consolidate their gains, go on increasing and refining their arsenal, and wait for the window of opportunity to open even wider and lock itself permanently into position. Soon enough, perhaps by the date chosen by Orwell's prophetic soul—when to their political ambition to dominate the West would have been added the Soviets' own economic need for Middle Eastern oil—the President of the United States, whoever he might be, would have to choose between nuclear war or Soviet control over the oil supply of the West. By then the vulnerability of our missiles to a Soviet first strike would automatically dictate surrender—checkmate by telephone, as someone has called it.

BUT whether now or then, what would surrender mean? What would the Finlandization of America look like?

In contrast to the traditional kind, this new species of surrender would not be accompanied by the arrival of Soviet troops or formalized in an unambiguous declaration. There would be no military occupation, and the closest thing to an announcement of surrender might be a speech by the President abrogating the Carter Doctrine in words similar to those already used in a letter published only a few weeks ago in the *New York Times*: "Why . . . should we, at the risk of starting World War III, keep the Russians from displacing the present owners? They might be more efficient producers, and they might save us money by eliminating the corruption that is an element of the present price." Such words would be applauded by "responsible" people, and they would represent the beginning of a gradual but steady process of accommodation to Soviet wishes and demands.

For example, to forestall a cut-off of oil, we would immediately shelve any plans for deploying the new theater nuclear weapons in Western Europe. Then various SALT agreements, entirely skewed in the Soviet favor but universally described as "mutual" and "balanced," would be negotiated. Trade agreements involving the transfer of technology, grain, and anything else the Soviets might want or need would also be negotiated on terms amounting to the payment of tribute, and with an inexorably commensurate decline in the American standard of living.

In countries like France and Italy, where huge Communist parties already exist, they would undoubtedly come to power, in all probability by democratic means. Indeed, many non-Communists would vote for them as the party most likely to represent the lightest form of Soviet domination—Red Vichy regimes whose loyalty to the foreign masters would make military occupation unnecessary and would preserve a minimal degree of national independence.

In the United States, where there is no Communist party to speak of, Finlandization would take a subtler political shape. Politicians and pundits would appear to celebrate the happy arrival of a new era of "peace" and "friendship" and "cooperation" between the Soviet Union and the United States. Dissenters from this cheerful view would be castigated as warmongers and ways would be found to silence questions and criticisms which could, after all, only result in making things worse for everyone. Only those politicians would run who could be depended upon to support the terms on which the threat of nuclear war had finally been banished from the earth. Of course such politicians would work toward a socio-political system more in harmony with the Soviet model than the "unjust" and "reactionary" system we have today.

There is no need to go on filling in the details.

A world in which the Soviet Union had the military power to seize control of the oil fields would be a world shaped by the will and tailored to the convenience of the Soviet Union.

LET us, however, suppose—let us pray—that it is not already too late. Let us suppose further that the Soviets do in fact launch a “peace offensive.” Will the American giant, so recently roused, be lulled back to sleep? No confident answer can be given to that question. On the one hand, the soporific forces among us remain powerful. There is, first and foremost, the fear of war—not only nuclear war but any kind of war. This normal human instinct has been strengthened and justified by a culture which in recent years has treated the pursuit of individual fulfillment as an absolute (has any culture in history ever before elevated selfishness into a moral ideal?), and which is very nearly incapable of conceiving anything worth fighting, let alone dying, for. “Anything” in this context preeminently includes the United States, which continues to be castigated in many quarters within America itself as the guilty party in every situation that arises. It is our fault that the Khmer Rouge murdered nearly half the population of Cambodia (because we drove them to desperate measures); it is our fault that the hostages were taken in Iran (because we supported the Shah for so many years); it is even our fault that the Soviets invaded Afghanistan (because by questioning the SALT treaty and taking steps to strengthen our defenses, we simultaneously frightened them and removed their incentive to restraint).

Even some influential commentators who do not reflexively blame the United States for everything evil that happens in the world often explain Soviet behavior in ways calculated to minimize American alarm. The Soviets, they tell us, are not really expansionist and certainly not out to dominate the world; all they want is to protect their own borders and their own security. Even the invasion of Afghanistan itself has been interpreted by several such commentators not as a sign of Soviet aggressiveness but as a symptom of Soviet weakness (in contrast, presumably, to the strength the United States showed in begging the UN and the World Court to do something about Iran). A striking instance is Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. In the 40's and 50's, when the Soviet Union was very much weaker than the United States, Schlesinger expressed great anxiety over the Soviet threat; yet now, when the Soviet Union is at least as powerful as we are and by any objective standard constitutes a greater threat, he keeps telling us how beleaguered and toothless the Russians have become.

All these elements, and others too, of the post-Vietnam mood remain in place; together they suggest a preemptive move toward self-Finlandization. On the other hand, a contrary tendency, and a very strong one, has been developing in the

United States toward what might be called a new nationalism. The eruption of patriotic feeling in response to the seizure of the hostages was the most visible manifestation of this tendency, but there are many indications that it was not created or caused by Iran. One significant piece of evidence is the steady rise registered by public-opinion polls since the early 70's in support of increased defense spending and a correlative rise in favor of the use of force to protect American interests.

This change has by no means been confined to the attitudes of the general public. As the course of the SALT debate has revealed, there is a much greater willingness to face the facts of the Soviet military build-up than used to be the case only a few years ago in Congress, in the press, and in the universities. And in the world of ideas generally, everyone agrees, whether happily or with alarm, that the most dynamic force in recent years has been the group known as the “neoconservatives.” There are grounds for wondering in what sense most members of this group are conservatives, “neo” or any other variety. But what cannot be questioned—and what makes them an unusual phenomenon in the history of the American intellectual community—is their highly positive attitude toward American society. Even more significant in this context is their conviction that the survival of liberty and democracy, here and everywhere else, requires the maintenance and exertion of American power.

Before Iran and Afghanistan, this new nationalist spirit had been spreading in influence and growing in intensity; since Iran and Afghanistan, it has all but swept away the last lingering traces of the post-Vietnam mood. No doubt as the weeks and months wear on, the twin furies of isolationism and appeasement unleashed by our humiliating defeat in Vietnam will recover from the blows of Iran and Afghanistan and will make their presence felt again. But one senses that the new nationalism is neither insubstantial nor evanescent. It will not easily be dissipated and politicians will ignore it, if they do, only at extreme peril to their chances at the polls. Therefore at the very least, before it runs its course, a variety of steps will be taken to strengthen our military capabilities. As “No More Vietnams” meant retrenchment and accommodation, “No More Irans” will mean making sure that we never again have to submit helplessly to being “pushed around”; and as the main “Lesson of Vietnam” was taken to be that we must never again intervene into the Third World, the great “Lesson of Afghanistan” is likely to be that unless we intervene under certain circumstances, we will find ourselves at the mercy of our enemies.

IN MY judgment, even if the new lessons were to go no further than they have already gone, they would constitute progress to-

ward a healthier and a safer America. Healthier because self-respect is spiritually superior to self-flagellation, in nations no less than in individuals; safer because the determination to defend our own interests will make us more secure than the inclination to appease.

Nevertheless something is still missing from the new nationalism. In the immediate aftermath of Iran, there was a good deal of talk about defending American honor. Since Afghanistan, most of the talk, in the streets, in the speeches, and in the official statements alike, has focused on defending our economic interests. That there is a political dimension to this crisis, that something more is at stake than injured pride or access to oil, no one seems to recognize or at any rate to emphasize. What this suggests is that the general American response to Iran and Afghanistan, while marking an end to the period of American retreat, has not yet carried us fully forward into a new period of containment.

The problem is that a key term has quietly disappeared from the discussion of the Soviet-American conflict. It is the term Communism. One would think from most of what has been said in recent months that the Soviet Union is a nation like any other with which we happen to be in competition. Yet if the Soviet Union really were a nation like any other—if it were, for example, still being ruled by the Czars—would we object to the extension of its power over the Persian Gulf? What difference would it make to us? Would we be worse off buying oil from the Czars than buying it from the sheiks? Might we not even prefer such an arrangement (as indeed the letter in the *Times* from which I quoted earlier does even now)?

We might, though even under those circumstances we would have cause for serious concern. But as it is, and to give us cause for far more serious concern, the Soviet Union is not a nation like any other. It is a revolutionary state, exactly as Hitler's Germany was, in the sense that it wishes to create a new international order in which it would be the dominant power and whose character would be determined by its national wishes and its ideological dictates. In such an order, there would be no more room for any of the freedoms we now enjoy than there is at this moment within the Soviet Union, or any of the other Communist countries, even the most lightly ruled of which are repressive beyond the most lurid nightmares of a politically pampered American experience.

In short, the reason Soviet imperialism is a threat to us is not merely that the Soviet Union is a superpower bent on aggrandizing itself, but that it is a Communist state armed, as Solzhenitsyn says, to the teeth, and dedicated to the destruction of the free institutions which are our heritage and our glory. To meet what George F. Kennan in 1947 called "this implacable challenge" will de-

mand today, as it did then, that we recognize Soviet purposes for what they are. It is tragic that Kennan himself, in 1980, should be among those working to prevent such a recognition. Writing of the invasion of Afghanistan, he condemns the "extravagant view of Soviet motivation" according to which this "ill-considered" Soviet action was "a prelude to aggressive military moves against various countries and regions further afield." The American response he dismisses as "strident"—a case of "warning people publicly not to do things they have never evinced any intention of doing." Most astonishing of all, Kennan tells us that he is "not aware of any substantiation" of the extravagant American view "in anything the Soviet leaders themselves had said or done."

If he is really looking for substantiation, I would advise him to begin by reading his own essay on "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" which, though written over thirty years ago, tells us more about the invasion of Afghanistan than the sorry article Kennan produced a few weeks after the invasion actually took place. The Kennan of 1980 sees the invasion as merely defensive: has not Brezhnev himself characterized it thus? The Kennan of 1947 would have understood that the invasion represents a new stage in what he described then as the unremitting "Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the Western world."

OF COURSE, in defining our conflict with the Soviet Union as a struggle for freedom and against Communism, we run into two great questions. The first concerns China. If Communism is the enemy, why should we be aligning ourselves with China, the other great Communist power? The answer given by supporters of the "China card" is the same justification that was used for the free world's alliance with one totalitarian ruler, Stalin, against another, Hitler, who was at that moment more dangerous. It is a reasonable answer. The problem, however, is that whereas Stalin made a major contribution to the defeat of Hitler, Communist China is so weak that its contribution to the containment of Soviet imperialism may be negligible. In order to keep forty Soviet divisions pinned down on the Chinese border—divisions the Soviet build-up has made it possible for them to spare—we may be helping to turn China into a terror to our children and grandchildren. And since China's only interest in us is protection from the Soviet Union, if we rely on the China card as an excuse for failing to build up our own power, we may at the same time find ourselves promoting what we most fear: a Sino-Soviet rapprochement.

Another price of the China card is the loss of political clarity it inevitably entails. Playing one Communist power off against another may be sound geopolitics, but it increases the difficulty of explaining to ourselves and our friends what we are fighting for and what we are fighting against.

It may therefore make it harder to mobilize the political support without which a steady and consistent strategy of containment is impossible.

This problem of mobilizing support is perhaps even more difficult in Western Europe and Japan than it is in the United States. The farmers of Iowa have already shown that they can see beyond their economic interests, but the French, the West Germans, and the Japanese seem to care only, as Jacobo Timerman puts it, about "the orderly supply and consumption of raw materials and the inviolability of their markets." Thus trade agreements between the Soviet Union and the West, which were supposed to create incentives to Soviet moderation, have evidently worked in the opposite direction so far as Western Europe and Japan are concerned. The Soviets have not been restrained by the cut-off of wheat, but the French and the West Germans have hesitated to back even the relatively mild measures the President has taken against the Soviet Union. Many European commentators—Bernard Levin, Jean-François Revel, and Olivier Todd, to name a few—see this as yet another sign that the process of self-Finlandization has gone much further in Europe than in the United States. But believing as most of them do that the chief cause of self-Finlandization is the fear of Soviet power and the concomitant loss of confidence in American resolve, they also think that a serious new assertion of American will and American power might lead to a reversal of the process and the beginning of a new determination in the other democracies to resist what Revel calls "the totalitarian temptation."

The other great question that inevitably arises in this connection is how we can speak of a "free world" that includes so many dictatorships of the Right. The answer here—as Pakistan is only the most recent case to make clear—is also based on geopolitical considerations. But from the point of view of freedom, there is a moral justification for preferring non-Communist dictatorships to Communist regimes. To this day it is hard to find a single Communist regime that permits the people living under it as much freedom as even the worst non-Communist dictatorships the world has known

since the death of Hitler. These non-Communist authoritarian societies are not free, but they still remain—both ideologically and in practice—on the other side of what from the point of view of freedom is the greatest of all divides.

IN RESISTING the advance of Soviet power, then, we *are* fighting for freedom and against Communism, for democracy and against totalitarianism. Yet it is precisely this sense of things that the new nationalism thus far lacks. Nor does the Carter Doctrine express it with force and clarity. Without such clarity, the new nationalism is unlikely to do more than lead to sporadic outbursts of indignant energy. It cannot by itself supply the basis of support for what Kennan described in 1947 as "the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy."

The possibility that the new nationalism will only prove to be a first step toward a rededication of the United States to such a strategy is what frightens Kennan himself and many others like him who have grown weary and fearful over the years. But "the thoughtful observer of Russian-American relations" today will no more find "cause for complaint in the Kremlin's challenge to American society" than Kennan did in 1947, when he experienced

a certain gratitude for a Providence which, by providing the American people with this implacable challenge, has made their entire security as a nation dependent on their pulling themselves together and accepting the responsibilities of moral and political leadership that history plainly intended them to bear.

I quoted those words earlier but they are worth quoting again as a stimulus and as a guide. Unless, of course, it really is too late—in which case Kennan's new defeatism will prove as appropriate a response to the present danger as his magnificent call to containment was to the danger of thirty years ago.

Reading About Jews

Ruth R. Wisse

SPEAKING of Jewish self-consciousness, a friend of mine once quipped that the word that leaps at her from the printed page with *second* greatest frequency is jewelry. I laughed, as in the Yiddish expression, with lizards. Jews read like scanners crossing a minefield, like pearl divers with one eye out for sharks. Jews read like compulsive investors in a market that is rarely bullish. Jews probably don't read as much as they used to, and Harold Bloom recently complained that they don't read as well. But like actors whose living depends on their success with the critics, they do keep close track of their own reviews.

What is it, one may wonder, that they hope to find?

Jewish writers, the ambivalent beneficiaries of this nervous attendance upon them, and upon them in particular, claim to have discovered what Jews *don't* like to find. It is many years since Philip Roth, in what would become the classic definition of the problem, protested against the reactions of readers who vilified and even threatened him for his collection of stories, *Goodbye, Columbus*. "Writing About Jews,"* as Roth explained it, was a hazardous profession. The young artist, intent on making great works, and drawing for that purpose on the only substantive material he has on hand—his own remembered experience, his culture, his surroundings—ends up writing about Jews. It is less a thematic choice than an artistic necessity. Since writers write about people, since Jews are people, writers may write about Jews. Since Jewish writers are themselves Jewish people, and since writers tend to write about people like themselves, Jewish writers tend to write about Jews. On the part of the author, this act involves the required degree of responsibility to one's audience and for one's characters, no more, no less.

But what if the audience does not understand this impersonal artistic convention of Western culture? Suppose the Jewish reader, coming upon a Jewish character—an adulterer, say, or a small-time blackmailer—should feel himself fingered, as though his own reputation had been irreparably damaged? This reaction would not be exactly ab-

normal among people who were historically treated as indistinguishable from one another and held responsible for one another's real or imagined sins. Worse still, what if this reader were so intimidated by the bare facts of the case—the adultery, the petty blackmail—that he failed to recognize the sympathetic treatment being accorded to the characters, "the bear hug . . . being administered right in front of his eyes"? In short, what if a young writer, simply doing the proper work of fiction, should be read by Jews who regarded themselves as in the dock at a public trial?

The results, as Roth set them forth in his article, were either amusing or distressing, depending once again on whether one stood with the author in the charmed convention of literature, or among the Jews in the public dock. Because here in this essay Roth really *was* putting the culpable Jews on trial. Quoting selectively from several letters from rabbis, Jewish professors, and untitled lay leaders, but always from prominent Jews, Roth exposed a sin that in the world of literary ethics is much more serious than adultery, blackmail, or even murder. "Not only do they seem to me often to have cramped and untenable notions of right and wrong, but looking at fiction as they do—in terms of 'approval' and 'disapproval' of Jews, 'positive' and 'negative' attitudes toward Jewish life—they are likely not to see what it is that the story is really about." In their strait jackets of morality, with their paranoid suspicions of being singled out for blame, lacking the empathetic imagination required of good readers, the quoted Jews are exposed as genuine philistines, the *bourgeois gentil-hommes* of American society, the more uncultivated for thinking themselves so "cultured."

Roth concludes his article with a personal challenge:

The question really is, who is going to address men and women like men and women, and who like children. If there are Jews who have begun to find the stories the novelists tell more provocative and pertinent than the sermons of some of the rabbis, perhaps it is because there are regions of feeling and consciousness in them which cannot be reached by the oratory of self-congratulation and self-pity.

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* COMMENTARY, December 1963.

As opposed to the clichés of thought and feeling of official Jews, writers will provide a more complex appeal to the senses and to consciences, and become the new spokesmen if not for, then certainly to, the Jews.

There are several compelling reasons for returning to this youthful essay, not the least of them its centrality in the author's imagination. In various moods of generosity, introspection, humor, and chagrin, Philip Roth has reenacted this confrontation between the Jewish misreader and himself, its chief victim.* In 1971, before a new dramatic production of some of the stories which had elicited the aforementioned attacks upon him, Roth reflected on his former insouciance, wondering if it had not been asking too much of people "still frozen in horror by the Nazi slaughter of European Jewry, to consider, with ironic detachment, or comic amusement, the internal politics of Jewish life." But not long after, following negative criticism from some Jewish sources of *Portnoy's Complaint*, Roth returned to his own sense of injury. Citing a number of his Jewish critics, he singled out as his main antagonist not one of those reviewers whose objections to the book were in large part aesthetic, but Marie Syrkin, the Zionist leader and spokesman, who in a letter to the editor of COMMENTARY wrote that she objected to the book on moral grounds. Once again, the Jewish novelist conjured up organized Jewry as incapable of appreciating the idiom of imaginative art.

The latest and most developed version of this archetypal confrontation has been transmuted into fiction in Roth's new novel, *The Ghost Writer*.† Nathan Zuckerman, in this portrait of the artist as a young Jew, moves from the parochialism of his father's house to the loftier constraints of the Palace of Art. Most of the book concerns the pursuit of a new spiritual father, a syncretic figure of the American Jewish writer who serves young Zuckerman as the complex model of True Master. Yet in order to see where the young artist is going, we have also to appreciate what he has overcome. Here, given due prominence, is that standard caricature of Philip Roth's satiric repertoire, the "prominent Jew," or the Jewish Yahoo. This role is assigned to Judge Leopold Wapter, "after the Jewish mayor and Rabbi Joachim Prinz, perhaps the city's most admired Jew." The attentive reader can find in Judge Wapter's coarse advice to the young artist a compendium of all the quoted letters in the essays referred to above: "What in your character makes you associate so much of life's ugliness with Jewish people?" or "Can you honestly say that there is anything in your short story that would not warm the heart of a Julius Streicher or a Joseph Goebbels?"

Wapter is the negative image of Lonoff, the artist. On one side the prominent Jew, with his concern for public image, his reflex of paranoia that has by now lost its authenticity, his cheap appeal to loyalty at the expense of truth, and his preten-

tious, cloying prose; opposite him, the majestic figure of Lonoff, the solitary Jewish artist, no less heroic, but only more human for the ironic perspective in which his admiring disciple presents him.

IN DRAWING attention to Roth's recurring preoccupation with "writing about Jews," I am not offering an analysis of his latest novel, or of his considerable achievement as a writer. As it happens, like most Jews of my generation, I place an inordinately high value on this achievement (in my case, especially on *Portnoy's Complaint*). But it is precisely this widespread overestimation of Roth's work that so seriously calls into question his cultural portrait of the Jews. A majority of Roth's Jewish readers are now, and have been from the beginning, as properly educated in Western culture as he, if not at the University of Chicago, then at some lesser institution with analogous courses in literature and art. They may not have become writers or even good readers, but they have learned enough about biographical fallacy, ambiguity, distance, and the difference between life and art to avoid any such gaucheries or "parochial judgments" as Roth delights in quoting. What is more, they have undoubtedly showered the author with adulatory letters in far greater numbers than those "uncultivated" Jews he is still battling after decades of recognition.

Far from being at odds with his Jewish readers, Philip Roth has served most of them as the very embodiment of their attitudes and values. He has been, as Irving Howe observed at the outset of his career, always perilously close to the surface realities he describes, imaginatively yoked to the Jewish middle class out of which he emerged. If their idea of a "real Jew" is a Hasid with fur hat and earlocks, so is his. If their picture-postcard image of Israel shows a Sabra with ready gun and bed, so does his. And if their idea of the slaughter of European Jewry finds its comforting symbolic rest in Anne Frank, so too does his. Roth has expressed for his generation of American Jews their lingering resentment of Jewish constraints, their shopworn images of Jewish identity, and their attendant idealization of Western civilization in which creativity figures as the highest good. It is only to achieve a sense of separation from a world view that is essentially his, and to suggest the idea of the artist as rebel, that Roth keeps alive the notion of a repressive "official" Jewry from whom the artist must liberate himself and whose limitations he must transcend. When Roth complained in a recent interview that people don't read him as attentively as they once did, I wonder whether he wasn't really complaining that certain Jews don't *misread* him as attentively as they once did,

* Several of these essays were collected in *Reading Myself and Others*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1975.

† Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1979. See also the review by Pearl K. Bell, COMMENTARY, December 1979.

thus affording him the chance to champion literature against them anew.

Roth is the ablest but by no means the only exponent of this image of a vulgar and repressive Jewish constituency. In a recent talk, derivatively entitled "Writing About Jews," the Canadian Jewish writer, Mordecai Richler, mounted the familiar complaints about Jews who "confuse their writers with publicists" and whose attitude toward art is the same as that of the Soviet Union! The Jewish community, he said without a flicker of irony, "suffers from an inability to make moral distinctions." Comparing his task to that of Balzac, Dickens, and Faulkner, "who could create the Snopeses without being considered anti-American," Richler defended the artist as one compelled to be an honest witness to his times. This talk marked a local Canadian opening of Jewish Book Month, established in 1941, as the audience was reminded, "as a countermeasure to the Nazi destruction of Jewish culture," and "to revive the traditional zeal for Jewish learning." The invitation extended to Richler on this occasion, and the hundreds of paying listeners, some of whom had literally pounded open the door to be allowed standing room in the aisles, bear witness to the very opposite of what he was contending. The community has undoubtedly erred in its assessment and expectations of Jewish writers, but in an excess of adulation, and with inflated expectations of what literature is likely to offer.

FOR the Jewish reader, Roth's concluding remarks in "Writing About Jews" yield a final point of interest. When he asks who is going to address men and women like men and women, and who like children; when he says there are Jews "who find the stories the novelists tell more provocative and pertinent than the sermons of some of the rabbis," he is setting up a dichotomy as false as it is momentarily persuasive. In the author's ingenious formulation, Jews are actually being invited to discriminate not between good and bad writers or between good and bad rabbis, but between bad rabbis and (by implication) good writers. That the author thereby gains for himself an unmerited advantage is less than half the problem. Of greater concern is the implied distortion of Judaism in being thus contrasted with Art.

In Roth's fiction and thought there is an axiomatic relation between Judaism and childishness, as there is between literature and maturity. The rabbi or Jewish spokesman is intellectually limited and correspondingly pompous since he has to compensate by exaggerated shows of authority for what he lacks in essential credibility. The Sunday school student, Ozzie Freedman, in Roth's early story, "The Conversion of the Jews," who reduces the rabbi to cringing obeisance, remains the author's image of the proper relation between the maturing child and his tradition. In this, too,

Roth shares with most of his Jewish contemporaries an attitude born of experience: Judaism is the stuff of Hebrew school, moral pap administered by faltering authorities; literature, on the other hand, is the epitome of civilization, an "expansion of moral consciousness . . . of considerable value to man and society."

While Philip Roth has rebuked his misreaders for not knowing how to distinguish between Jewish adultery and the adultery of a Jewish character, there is every indication that he himself has never distinguished between Judaism and his own childish perception of it. Roth accuses his misreaders of focusing on his "anti-Semitism" while overlooking the warmth of his affection. But in concentrating on his detractors, it is he who falsely victimizes himself, ignoring the enthusiastic embrace of his readers and the degree to which they share his values. Roth has exposed the hyper-ambition of American Jews, their eagerness to cover the traces of their poverty with ostentatious shows of wealth. He is part of that movement. His disdain for his "primitive" cultural origins bears an unmistakable resemblance to their rejection of shabbiness. But whereas poverty may indeed be better left behind, Judaism is not. In that respect, the Jewish writer's move to literary refinement, which he interprets as an ascending rather than a lateral exchange of priorities, is not so benign as the material climb he mocks.

That Jewish readers did not initially object to Roth's infantilization of Judaism (or to the Christological Judaism of Bernard Malamud) may be due to the very humble expectations of the Jewish reader of English fiction. To come upon the American Jewish writers of the 1950's, as educated readers often did, after a diet of T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, Henry Adams and Henry James, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Hemingway and even Faulkner, was to be so grateful for Jewish characters who assumed recognizable human and occasionally even attractive form that to ask for more would have been inconceivable, as if Oliver had demanded better cuisine. Here at least were writers who represented Jews not as the corrupters of Western society or as exotic greenhorns, but as an intrinsic part of American life, making their own intricate adjustment to its complexities.

The relief in having recognizably *good* Jewish writers taking on the stuff of Jewish experience was especially great since the anti-Jewishness of American literature had by no means been confined to its Gentile practitioners. A particularly virulent strain of anti-Semitism was current among those artists and writers, many Jews among them, for whom Marxism had become, if not the touchstone of values, then certainly the language in which values were weighed. In this language, Judaism was at worst exploitative, at best irrelevant. Jewish writers in this sphere of influence often consciously avoided Jewish heroes and turned even minor characters into cultural neuters

in order to avoid the parochial associations a "Jewish character" would introduce. In the Soviet Union, the reduction of ethnicity was part of dictated and controlled literary policy. In America, it was largely an "artistic" decision at a time when anti-Semitism was a powerful ideological component of both the Right and the Left.

READERS have long since caught and identified the slurs against them of non-Jewish writers, but the subtler effect of Marxist anti-Semitism, which far outlasted the direct Communist influence, has never been fully identified. This, in part, is what Meyer Levin angrily documents in his book, *Obsession*, which accuses Lillian Hellman and others of de-Judaizing *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Unfortunately, Levin's attack is so personalized that its general observations are lost in the author's plea for attention to his own problem. But the literary techniques developed during this period for undoing the Jews are still worth identifying, and they still rankle.

A perfect instance of this kind of anti-Jewishness is Arthur Miller's novel, *Focus*, originally published in 1945 and recently reissued as part of Miller's collected works.* Since the book is ostensibly an attack on racial prejudice, it does not draw attention to its own tendency in the same direction. Miller's novel shows how the truly "deracinated" Jewish artist and intellectual may repudiate the Jew even while he is pretending to defend him.

Focus is the story of Lawrence Newman, an ordinary white Protestant minor executive, whose short-sightedness one day necessitates the adoption of eyeglasses, and whose eyeglasses make him look like a Jew. As a consequence of this wholly accidental identification, Newman is forced into the fate of the Jew, and exposed to increasingly violent confrontations with anti-Semites. At first he tries to prove his "innocence," even joining the anti-Semites so as to dissociate himself from his imposed identity. But when these tactics fail, Newman is finally goaded into accepting the identification, feeling "as though he were setting down a weight which for some reason he had been carrying."

The plot device obviously antedates the introduction of contact lenses. It is no more or less clumsy than that used in Laura Hobson's contemporaneous novel, *Gentleman's Agreement*, in which a reporter becomes a Jew to write an exposé of anti-Semitism. While Miller's hero is the more existentially anxious, because he does not volunteer for the role, the thematic point of both books is identical. What makes the Jew defensible is not the legitimacy of Judaism, the normalcy of Jewish national survival, or any other intrinsic value, but that undifferentiated essence which comes of having been accidentally born with a certain physiognomy and paternity, as external as eyeglasses and about as meaningful in shaping identity. At no

time in either book is it ever suggested that a meaningful Jewishness—whether religious, Zionist, ethnic, or any other kind—exists or deserves to exist.

It may be argued that the device chosen by the novelists is the most appropriate for the task they set themselves, namely, the exposure of anti-Semitism to a public that might not understand the internal niceties of Judaism but would be persuaded of the individual's right to live freely in America. If so, it is also clear that the authors were offering the only defense with which they themselves were comfortable. This is particularly clear in *Focus*, which includes as part of its defense of the Jew an exceptionally nasty bit of apologetics.

The only real Jew in Miller's novel is a candy-store owner named Finkelstein who is one of several foils in the hero's evolution from passive anti-Semite to symbolic "Jew." Since the whole book is written from the perspective of the Gentile, Newman, the reader is startled when the author interrupts this narrative to follow Finkelstein on a chapter-long trip to the cemetery, a visit to his father's grave on an impulse Finkelstein himself does not understand.

Miller uses the contrived cemetery trip for one purpose only—to introduce an archetypal story, "the one story his father had been able to tell time after time . . . without changing it." It is a familiar enough story of a Polish baron, a peasant uprising against him after bloody provocation, and a Jewish peddler, Itzik, whom the baron sends in to fleece his ignorant tenants, making him the convenient scapegoat for their wrath. Having forced this story into his novel, Miller then forces upon it a "meaning" which, since the author is still prominent in our midst, is worth quoting in full:

The meaning, he saw again as he rode the trolley through Bushwick, was that this Itzik should never have allowed himself to accept a role that was not his, a role that the baron had created for him. When he saw that the baron was bent on diverting the peasants' wrath from himself, he should have allowed his indignation to carry him away and gotten on his wagon and driven directly home. And when the pogrom came, as it would have no matter what he did, he could have found the strength to fight. It was the pogrom that was inevitable, but not its outcome. Its outcome only seemed inevitable because that money was in his house as the horses' hoofs came pounding into the village. That money in his house had weakened him, it was the blindfold they had put upon his face and he had no right to let them put it on him. Without that blindfold he would have been ready to fight; with it he was only ready to die.

Finkelstein thereupon comforts himself. Since he has no filthy lucre in his own house, he will have the moral energy to resist.

* Penguin Books, 1978.

Thus an American Jew, writing in 1945, as European Jews had just undergone their final pogrom, understands the meaning of Jewish history: the trouble is that the Jews failed to resist their social role. Either Miller did not know, which makes him culpably ignorant, or he pretended not to know, which makes him viciously cynical, that Jews in feudal Poland did not choose their economic functions with quite the same ease as they do in America. For him the presence of anti-Semitism implies Jewish guilt. Jewish guilt derives from the Jewish sin of exploitation. The theorems of Marxist anti-Semitism have found no more classic expression than this.

Here, then, is Miller's defense of the American Jew: first, he is undifferentiated; second, he has finally shed his dishonest role of middleman. This book may indeed have combated anti-Semitism—by proving to anti-Semites that there was nothing left for them to do.

In monitoring their "reviews," Jewish readers have not always been as sensitive to insult as they are made out to be and as they should have been. Sharing to the degree that they do the accepted ideas of their time, they sometimes even fail to sense what is really being said about them and about the tradition to which some of them still adhere. The inability or reluctance of Jews properly to *understand* literature—the moral lesson of Philip Roth's essay—may be demonstrated just as persuasively by what Jews have failed to protest as by the examples of protest that petulant authors cite. It may be the educated and sophisticated Jews, twittering nervously about the sanctity of art, who more seriously subvert the literary enterprise—as in their recent rush to boost the reputation of so vulgar an item as Joseph Heller's *Good as Gold*.

ALL this still leaves open the question with which I began. If Jews are ever on the hunt for their reflection in print, it is not only out of fear of the bad news, but with hopeful expectations of the good as well. The phenomenon of postwar American Jewish authors writing openly and often brilliantly about Jews raised among Jewish readers a slow but steady wave of anticipation. What is it in the works of Jewish writers that we hope to find?

One tends to forget, given the subsequent cataclysms of Jewish life, with what suddenness the modern age descended on European Jewry, and with what consequent impact. The greatest victim of change was the old authority: the teachings of the rabbis, the heads of yeshivahs, and the saintly scholars could have little relevance to young Jews catching their first breathtaking glimpse of emancipation and the cornucopia of Western achievement. Jewish civic leaders, usually merchants with somewhat higher than average status, could do little to mitigate the impoverishing effect of Czarist edicts, or stem the outward flow of population, or

impose the necessary discipline on a disintegrating community. Yet the need for new guidelines was as relentless as the rejection of the old. And since Jewish authority had always emerged from texts, it was natural for Jews to seek new authority in the same form. The dominant image of the Jewish transition to modernity may well be the small book of philosophy, natural science, or literature, concealed by a yeshivah student inside the large and sturdy Talmud folio that he would soon abandon.

I believe it was the Yiddish critic, Shmuel Niger, who said that by the end of the 19th century the Jewish reader had begun to seek in the *bukh*, the secular book, what he had formerly found in the *sefer*, the text of tradition. Niger made the observation in a discussion of modern Yiddish and Hebrew literature, which had begun to serve the evolving Jewish community as a substitute for its previous sources of instruction, inspiration, and creative amusement. Despite the great differences between the cohesive society Niger was describing and the Jews of contemporary America, something of his observation remains true. The contemporary Jewish reader is still looking for a synthesis between a culture he is supposed to have inherited and the one of which he forms a part. Though the American Jewish writer rarely treats the art of literature as a Jewish pursuit, some of his Jewish readers are trying to find in him the continuity in an interrupted chain of transmission.

When this Jewish reader turns to a Jewish writer, particularly to one who has chosen a "Jewish" subject for whatever creative purpose of his own, he is looking not merely for the expansion of consciousness and all the other good things that good books provide, but for a milestone in his own quest for identity. Often unfamiliar with the classic Jewish texts, he hopes the secular book will help to compensate for what is missing. How else explain the earnest Book Review Series of synagogue sisterhoods and men's clubs, the home-study groups where Malamud and Roth and Bellow are standard texts? Even the courses on American Jewish fiction introduced at many colleges and universities are part of the same search for a new Jewish culture, what Cynthia Ozick has called a new Jewish language. The dream is that art, on which Western civilization places such value, will define a new Jewish national posture, refashion a mythology, forge new links between the inherited teachings and the amorphous claims of the present. In their cultural hunger and their mistaken notion that he will provide it, Jewish readers have helped to make the American Jewish writer the envy of his non-Jewish peers.

Unfortunately for these readers, Jewish writers in English have rarely shared this vision. Among the few who did, the most successful was A.M. Klein, the Canadian Jewish poet who placed himself in a North American literary context, but

whom national convention has consigned to the narrower Canadian berth. Klein's lifelong enterprise was to amalgamate the two cultures in which he was raised in order to pioneer a distinctively Anglo-Jewish or Judeo-English style.

Klein had the advantage of being a well educated Jew, familiar with Jewish classical sources and with modern Yiddish and Hebrew writing. He was also a well-educated English poet, one of the "Montreal Group" of the late 1920's that included the poet, A.J.M. Smith, and the future literary biographer, Leon Edel, who together helped spur the development of a Canadian modernism. Although he never completed what was to have been a definitive study of *Ulysses*, Klein was a recognized authority on James Joyce, a writer whom he studied "like the Talmud" and for whom he felt a complex set of cultural affinities.*

IN ATTEMPTING to conjoin his literary traditions, Klein wrote not only about Jews, but *for* Jews. He did not dilute his contextual vocabulary, assuming on the part of his readers a Jewish education at least equal to his own. Unlike his fellow native Montrealer, Saul Bellow, in whose work Yiddish phrases and Jewish references are usually accompanied by courteous explanations for the non-initiated, Klein wrote a richly-veined Jewish English with no internal glossary. "You are right when you say that my book presupposes on the part of the reader a knowledge of the Hebrew tradition," he wrote to a friendly critic on the publication of his volume of poems, *Hath Not a Jew*. "Apart from being written because I wished to write it, the book is addressed precisely to those who have that knowledge or those who may acquire it."

It is clear from Klein's writing that the Jew and the artist were not easily accommodated within the same framework. He expends great energy trying to remain true to both axes of his identity. To succeed he must incorporate two critical perspectives. Of the poet, Karl Shapiro, for example, he praises the poetry while deploring his negative images of the Jew. He reviews Ezra Pound in a malicious Canto of his own which uses the poet's own style to damn him:

U S U R A: that his offense
that he sought to extract an exorbitant interest
from a limited talent.

At the same time, Klein would not lower his aesthetic standards to accommodate a facile nationalism, or to praise a book merely because its ideas were good. He knew that a national character would never emerge in a literature through a programmatic act of will, but only through the force of character and personality of its writers, "and for this . . . it is necessary only that they possess talent."

Klein's own considerable talent resulted in a

small but fine body of poetry and a novel, *The Second Scroll*,† that are as close as modern Jewish readers have come to an English-language high culture addressed directly to their collective imagination. His trademark is wit, the sign of his semi-ironic effort in yoking together two such disparate worlds. Sometimes the wit is gentle, as in his "Psalter of Avram Haktani," a wonderfully varied series of lyrics in which Abraham Klein draws attention to his diminution in the Hebrew equivalent of his patronym, *Haktani*, while grandly linking his proper name to the first of the Patriarchs, and his medium to the biblical canon. At other times, Klein's wit is fierce: in the *Hitleriad* of 1944 Klein *heils* his heavenly muse in a mock epic that throbs with deadly rage. As one who shared the national passion of the Jews, Klein did not select his topics for their artistic possibilities alone, or wait for the proper cooling distance to separate him from the slaughter of his people. *The Hitleriad* and other poems of World War II bear the marks of incontinent frustration.

As might be expected of a writer whose imagination has its roots in Jewish experience, Klein's writing was filled with longing for the East. *The Second Scroll*, a novel which grew out of Klein's own postwar mission to Casablanca and Israel, tells of a young Jew's search for his uncle, Melech Davidson (king, son of David), whom he pursues through the ruins of Europe, the ghettos of North Africa, and the settlements of Israel, catching signs of him everywhere, but seeing him never. This messianic work required of Klein the simultaneous creation of a new diction, and a new vision of contemporary Jewry. In comparing this book with a similar later work, Arthur A. Cohen's *In the Days of Simon Stern*, one can note many differences of sensibility and style, but none more striking than this: whereas Cohen's emphasis is on Jewish survival, Klein's is on Jewish glory, on the formal and spiritual brilliance of Judaism, and on its reconstituted dream in Zion.

Whatever our assessment of Klein's artistic merit (possibly inflated in Canada and under-appreciated elsewhere), he is an interesting challenge to Jewish readers who think they want a high Judeo-English culture of their own. Klein places the reader at the point of intersection between two strong currents, inviting him to enjoy the intermingled best of both worlds. But those who are not thoroughly rooted in both the English and Jewish literary traditions will either lose their footing and feel foolishly exposed, or resent the labor required for the degree of pleasure received. Even the ideal reader may find himself focusing on the strain of the author's attempt, which, like the throbbing muscles of a weightlifter, often detracts from the grace of the finished act.

* A biographical study of A. M. Klein by Usher Caplan is soon to be published in Canada.

† Knopf, 1951.

At the other end of the literary spectrum, where readers are offered easy access to everything, there have emerged in the past few years a number of writers who also bring the gritty substance of Judaism into the accepted conventions of popular literature. There is, for example, Harry Kemelman's amiable detective, Rabbi David Small, whose Jewish credentials are among the most authentic in modern fiction. As his name suggests, Rabbi Small resists the inflation of obvious heroism, and instead projects the steady, disciplined intelligence of Jewish legal analysis. Conservative by temperament, as are all the best detectives of the genre, this Jewish mystery-solver relies on the discriminating procedures of his own traditions, first to resist his own congregation's flirtation with various trendy "improvements," and second to protect the innocent by uncovering the guilty. Kemelman's failings are merely artistic. Even by the standards of the mystery novel, the hero is too formulaically stilted, the plots somewhat forced, the motivations hollow. Though the books may reinforce a positive cultural stereotype, they do not work the mystery of literature, which is to capture the soul's assent.

The same is true for the fiction of Chaim Potok, who is a fine 19th-century American Jewish novelist. In form and in content, Potok's novels derive from a much earlier period, when Jews were still firm in their ways, and the novel still grounded in its understanding of man in society. Potok's heroes emerge from the enveloping certainties of Judaism into the modern era with the freshness of villagers entering industrial towns, and with about the same degree of contemporaneity. Their conflicts between Orthodox religious practice and such modern infractions as social science, modern biblical criticism, and secular art allow for meaty dramatic confrontations with a high level of Jewish content, but for Potok's readers, such conflicts are the stuff of nostalgia. Part of the reader's facile pleasure in reading about Orthodox heroes who become moderns is knowing that he himself has long since moved in the right direction.

In the making of a Jewish literary culture it is not enough that writers portray an authentic Judaism. When art is the category of transmission, its authenticity must first be assured.

IN LOOKING to writers, perhaps the one thing Jewish readers want most is a *champion*. Even if Jews were not so buffeted by world events, and even if they were less sensitive to attack, they would still, as a normal national group, have need of good spokesmen to defend their honor, to interpret their vision of justice, to fight for their interest and right. Expressing the dignity of one's people has been one of the time-honored roles of the poet, especially in times of national sorrow and fear. It is not a role that many American Jewish writers have ever thought to assume.

All the more remarkable, then, was the appearance a few years ago of Saul Bellow's *To Jerusalem and Back*. For years Saul Bellow has patiently tried to place himself in the unhyphenated tradition of American and English writing. He has good-naturedly tried to pry himself loose from what he has called the "Hart, Schaffner, and Marx" approach of Jewish readers to Jewish writers and to emphasize his literary indebtedness to Joyce, Dostoevsky, and the American masters. His artistic undertaking has been not at all the same as A. M. Klein's. Far from attempting to "amalgamate" two cultures, as Klein did, Bellow moved bodily into Western literature, bringing with him, as any wise immigrant would, every shred of his own possessions in order to make himself thoroughly at home in his new surroundings. In doing so, he eventually transformed, or at least affected, the literature he entered, but that is simply the consequence of his talent. Bellow's novels are preoccupied with Western civilization in general and America in particular; nowhere are they addressed to any particular concern of the Jews.

To Jerusalem and Back moves out of the author's usual sphere, which is fiction. This is a memoir, a "personal account" of his visit to Israel in 1976 and his subsequent ruminations about that visit. It is an exceptionally eloquent book, reminiscent of Zola's *J'accuse* in its moral passion, vividly alert to detail and nuance. Bellow presents himself as his own character—a novelist who would rather be writing novels were it not for the sense of urgency he feels. As a famous writer, he was invited to visit Israel, and went. Once there, he is faced with an obvious anxiety: "On this speck of land—an infinitesimal fraction of the surrounding territories—a troubled people has come to rest, but rest is impossible." The anxiety becomes the author's own. He gathers and sifts all the information he can, bringing to the task as high a degree of intelligence and courage as it has ever received. When he returns to Chicago, he brings all this back with him and tries to put it all together. "But this subject resists clarification." No prescriptive suggestions are offered, and as in Bellow's novels, no resolutions are proposed. Only the sustaining moral strength of the author's judgments defies despair.

Bellow's rich sense of life is always embedded in details of character and observation. Here the dignity of Israel is similarly confirmed in snatches of conversation, glimpses of family life, fragments of literature, ordinary decencies of life that are only extraordinary because of the evil and pain among which they manage to persist. One of Bellow's great subjects has been "the difficulty (the impossibility, rather) of screening out the great noise of modern life." What has been for him an artistic problem becomes in Israel a struggle between "politics and peace." Reluctantly, he has entered the great noise of politics because he thinks Israel deserving of peace.

This memoir marks one of the few occasions when the American Jewish writer has shared the preoccupations of ordinary Jews. Until recently, nothing so critically pointed up the chasm between Jewish readers and most of "their" writers as this unshared passion for Israel—on the one hand, a community uncommonly united in concern and deed, on the other, an uncommon indifference. Bellow's book, though late in coming, suggests that Jews may have had good reason to look hopefully in the direction of their good writers. No publicist could have written with such skill, no professional Jew with the same artistic authority, the same ability to persuade, if mankind were only open to persuasion.

Yet when all is said and done, the book is one of a kind, in quantity as in quality. Saul Bellow remains a novelist who will return to the world of fiction to its eternal advantage. Fiction will continue to set its own conditions of identification and moral relativism which derive, as Philip Roth correctly implies, not from the civilization and religious structure of the Jews, but from the conventions and requirements of literature. Jews may seek their champion, but when they themselves appear in fiction, they will be shaped in the author's image, not their own. And the writer is rarely a custodian of Judaism, rarer still a defender of the Jews.

TO EXPECT from American Jewish literature a new cultural tradition is to look for clay and mortar in Newcastle, for coal

in Pharaoh's Egypt, for the right thing in the wrong place, and in the right place for the wrong thing. Those earlier generations who were the direct products of a traditional Judaism might have found cultural continuity in literature because both writers and readers brought the tradition into literature with them. Modern Jewish readers, bringing nothing to literature but what they hope to discover in it, will find at best only a reflection of their needs.

The ideal of an American Jewish literary culture is not likely to be realized. The truth is, William Styron may have more interesting things to say about victimization these days than Bernard Malamud, and Joan Didion is certainly closer to the Jewish moral imagination than Erica Jong.* The legitimate hunger of Jews for inspired direction, a hunger they share with modern men and women of every group, has sought its satisfaction in what they considered the likeliest source—in the writings of their fellow Jews. The search itself is not parochial, only the place of its launching. Writers of fiction, however great the hope we may invest in them, cannot replace the rabbis, however small the confidence we may place in them.

* Styron's literary treatment of the Holocaust in *Sophie's Choice* may actually have been intended as a challenge to the Jewish "appropriation" of Auschwitz, as Alvin Rosenfeld argues in an essay, "The Holocaust According to William Styron," *Midstream*, December 1979. I am not suggesting that either Styron or Joan Didion is a substitute Jewish writer, merely that the apparent distinctions in American literature between "Jewish" and "non-Jewish" subjects and issues may be increasingly insubstantial.

France's New Right

Roger Kaplan

IN THE summer of 1979 a veritable storm broke out in the French media on an unlikely subject: a serious revival of the French Right. Scores of articles were written, most of them denouncing what was described as an attempt by a new group of writers and thinkers to give intellectual respectability to "fascist" ideas, including the use of genetic engineering in social policy. In one of the more striking side effects of the affair, the director of a committee of intellectuals for liberal democracy brought a libel suit against two leftist newspapers, the weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur* and the Socialist daily *Le Matin*, because of allegations that the committee belonged to this "New Right." Whatever it was, the "New Right" was upsetting a great many people.

Compared to the 60's and early 70's, there has been a remarkable degree of open-mindedness in French intellectual life recently, especially since the "New Philosophers" demolished the reigning orthodoxies of pop-Marxism.* For the most part, as with the "New Philosophers" themselves, the search for fresh ideas has amounted to a discussion among men and women who come from the various families of the Left. Until quite recently, for example, Jean-François Revel always insisted on describing himself as a man of the Left, and J.-J. Rosa, for another example, the leader of the "new economists" who are skillfully advancing arguments for a relatively free market, is originally from the moderate Left. The brilliant constellation of liberal thinkers around Raymond Aron's new review, *Commentaire*, often speak a language which, while it may not owe much to the traditions of the French Left, is somehow more accessible (and infuriating) to it than to the Right.

There was, to be sure, a time when the French Right was very influential, not least among intellectuals. From the Dreyfus Affair to the "*révolution nationale*" of Marshal Pétain, no discussion of ideas and politics in France would be complete if it omitted the *Action française* of Charles Maurras and Maurice Pujo and other extreme Right formations. Though the 30's were mainly red, the 20's had been white. But after World War II and

the anti-collaborationist purges, the Right disappeared as a serious intellectual presence in French culture. While various centrists and nationalists—since 1958, Gaullists and Giscardiens—held political power, right-wing thinkers sank into reactionary sects characterized by irrelevant and often repulsive ideas.

The events of May 1968 and their aftermath—the student riots and the large-scale industrial strikes followed a month later by the great Gaullist electoral triumph—led inevitably to a number of reassessments and new developments on both the Left and the Right. In fact, the wake of May 1968 witnessed the complete degeneration of the French Left. On the one hand were the *gauchistes*, bordering on terrorism and overtly supporting such movements as the PLO; on the other hand were the neo-Stalinists of the *Union de la Gauche*, aptly symbolized by the Socialist party logo, the flower inside the clenched fist. It was then that the "New Philosophers"—disgusted by this spectacle, shamed by Solzhenitsyn and other Russian dissident writers, encouraged by their teachers' critique of power as an inherently bad thing—began to come to grips with the Left's totalitarian heritage, and in the ensuing years have attempted with greater or lesser success to forge a genuinely liberal alternative.

Yet these years also saw the emergence of a young intellectual Right. Most people in France were unaware of it, but a number of young writers and political thinkers were busy creating reviews and clubs in which to thrash out the intellectual premises of a conservative movement that might challenge the Left's control of the cultural life of France. As if to underline the pedigree they were claiming for themselves—all the way back to Periclean Athens and beyond—their basic study center was deliberately named GRECE (*Groupement de recherche et d'études pour la civilisation européenne*). Closely associated with it is a publishing firm, Copernic, created in 1977, whose list cannot fail to strike one at first as somewhat bizarre, containing as it does such titles as *The Adventures of Lydéric*, by Alexandre Dumas; *The Secret of Atlantis*, by Jurgen Sparuth; *Sunlight on Stonehenge*,

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* See my article, "France's 'New Philosophers,'" COMMENTARY, February 1978.

by G. S. Hawkins; as well as *Inequality*, by H. J. Eysenck and *Judaism and Christianity*, by Ernest Renan.

According to its spokesmen, GRECE members do not engage in any overt political activity, because they believe the cultural climate in France has to change before an attempt to gain political influence can be successful. Yet GRECE also maintains that its ideas must have public consequences if they are to signify anything, and to this end a public-policy organization was founded in 1974, the *Club de l'Horloge*, made up, in the main, of young graduates of France's top administration school, the ENA. The precise relations between this club and GRECE are not clear, although according to *Le Monde* the club's president, Yvan Blot, has participated in GRECE activities and once addressed a colloquium under its auspices in these terms, without ironic intent: "To found a new aristocracy, we need slaves." (Blot denies the charge.)

In 1979, *Le Figaro*, which had been purchased a couple of years earlier by the press baron Robert Hersant, added a weekend magazine, sold with the Saturday edition of the paper. Louis Pauwels was made editor of this magazine, and he opened its pages to members of the "New Right," thus lifting them rather abruptly out of their little reviews. In particular, Pauwels chose as his assistant Jean-Claude Valla, the former editor of GRECE's bi-monthly, *Éléments pour la civilisation européenne*, and gave the regular feature column on the world of ideas to its chief editorialist, Alain de Benoist. De Benoist is the most prolific writer of the "New Right" and is acknowledged by his colleagues as one of their "*maîtres à penser*."

THE prominence given to the "New Right" by *Figaro-Magazine* seems to have provoked the press furor last summer. No one has assayed a scientific estimate of the real influence of the "New Right," but there have been typically French guesses regarding who is behind the phenomenon. For example, the Communists and *Le Nouvel Observateur* are inclined to blame the party of Giscard d'Estaing—which would be a very serious charge, if it could be sustained. And as noted already, *Le Nouvel Observateur* has tried to make GRECE and the liberals two aspects of the same phenomenon. But if the "New Right" is going to play a role in the current ferment in the French intellectual world, it is worth knowing something of its ideas, which are more important than unsubstantiated charges about its backers or its alleged sinister intentions. And for its ideas one must turn to Alain de Benoist, born in 1943 and gifted with a clear writing style.

Concerning the traditional Right—to begin with—de Benoist is unambiguous:

The old Right in France has always been reactionary. The reactionary spirit is perhaps the

thing I hate most in the world. . . . [To be reactionary means] trying to bring back a past period or condition. [To be conservative, on the other hand, means] basing oneself on the best of all the past, in order to reach a *new* situation. In my view, all true conservatism is revolutionary.

Jean-Claude Valla, Pauwels's assistant at *Figaro-Magazine*, puts it more violently:

Among the theocratic networks of the nationalist far Right, the Charles Maurras loyalists, the xenophobes in Basque berets, the ones who miss Marshal Pétain, and the Waffen-SS groupies, there is no room for an intellectual world. Missing are the fresh air and the lucidity that are needed for an analysis which would be directly relevant to present reality.

These statements are clear enough, and serve to demarcate the "New Right" from the old (although it should be remembered that virtually every right-wing group that has ever existed in modern France began its career with a violent denunciation of every other group for assorted sins and failures). At any rate, Alain de Benoist takes very seriously the need for fresh air. A man of wide-ranging curiosity and an avid reader, he exposes his reactions to books and ideas carefully, at times pedantically. He is convinced that the Right must concentrate on culture, not politics. This is a notion derived, he acknowledges, in large part from his reading of Antonio Gramsci, founder of the Italian Communist party:

From Gramsci's point of view, in a developed society, the "passage to socialism" occurs neither by putsch nor by a direct confrontation, but by the transformation of general ideas, which is to say a slow reshaping of consciousness. And the stake of this war of positions is the culture, that is the source of values and ideas.

In a country like France, "the seizure of political power is not possible until after the seizure of cultural power." This is the exact opposite of Charles Maurras's axiom, "Politics first."

The first maneuver in this war of positions has been a concerted assault upon the idea of equality. Western culture, the "New Right" believes, is dominated by the idea of equality, indeed has been for some two thousand years. The ideal of equality, according to de Benoist, has led inexorably to the pursuit of egalitarianism, the doctrine of equality of results which has replaced the old doctrine of equality of opportunity (he maintains he believes in the latter). The perverse and socially debilitating effects of the pursuit of equality cannot be tolerated much longer, and it is of the essence to create values that will replace it.

De Benoist insists on this point in a very wide variety of contexts. Whether he is writing on free-market economics or on opposition to Communism, he returns to fundamentals: the real enemy of Europe for two thousand years has been egalitarianism. Communism and capitalism are simply

two of its possible conclusions. To oppose tyranny, one must understand the value of the two anti-egalitarian ideas: the idea of diversity among individuals and nations, and the idea of elites and of hierarchical order.

De Benoist includes the idea of diversity in his definition of the Right, properly understood:

I call rightist the attitude which consists of seeing as something good the world's *diversity*, and the relative inequalities which follow from it; and of seeing as an evil the gradual homogenization of the world, advanced and put into effect by the two-thousand-year-old argument of egalitarian ideology.

Diversity and inequality go together. The particularities of each of the world's cultures must be preserved, for they have values and merit intrinsic to themselves. As far as Europe is concerned, the "New Right" applauds regionalist tendencies and favors the study of ancient peoples such as the Celts and, further back, the "Indo-Europeans." For if Europe does not recover its own cultural roots it will be submerged by one or the other of the superpowers:

The principal menace today . . . is the gradual disappearance of diversity from the world: the leveling of individuals, the reduction of all cultures to a "world civilization" founded on what is most common. . . . From Holiday Inn to Howard Johnson, the outlines of a uniformly gray world are emerging.

Individuals, like nations, can be leveled down. To guard against this, de Benoist extols the notion of the elite. Equality of opportunity is essential, but

. . . value is measured essentially by the responsibilities each person takes on, based on his measurable aptitudes; liberty consists of the opportunity to exercise these responsibilities; to these responsibilities, a proportional amount of rights correspond; and the result is a hierarchy. . . .

For Louis Pauwels, to belong to the "New Right" means

to admit the fact of inequalities among men, the necessity of elites, and the existence of as it were preconceived elites, from birth. . . . Do we want an egalitarian democracy that increasingly levels . . . or shall we create a true "meritocracy" based on the notion of elite, an elite that can be sought wherever it may be?

Now, France is nothing if not an elitist society, and neither de Benoist nor Pauwels has, to my knowledge, explained in what way he considers its elite, formed in one of the world's most rigorous educational systems, to be threatened in its structure by rampant egalitarianism. Nor is the republican meritocracy of France especially Christian in practice or inspiration, yet to de Benoist there is an axiomatic relationship between egalitarianism and "Judeo-Christianity,"

and it is the latter which is supposed to have been subverting Europe, including France.

"Judeo-Christianity," according to de Benoist, is an alien system imposed by force two thousand years ago upon the descendants of the Indo-European peoples. It is contrary to their genius. In its present, degenerate, secular form, which he refers to as "Freudo-Marxism," it is particularly subversive.

In terms of ideas, Judaism is, as one might expect, at the root of what de Benoist calls "Judeo-Christianity." In his reading, the fanatical monotheism of the deserts of Arabia [sic] gave the world intolerance, and ultimately totalitarianism. Jesus, first of the "Bolsheviks of antiquity," is considered by de Benoist to have been a totalitarian for having said, "He who is not for me is against me."

Although one of de Benoist's friends has written of "exterminating Judaism metaphysically," and another has called monotheism the worst type of slavery, de Benoist has shown more restraint on this point, preferring to commend to his readers the ideas of Nietzsche and Gibbon on Christianity. In this view, Christianity is the one thing the ancient Romans failed to anticipate and which they were not equipped to resist. In giving to each man a soul equally dear to God, Christianity sapped the empire's elite, which had been educated on the classical notion that a soul is something a man forges. Christianity acquired its revolutionary force in part from this notion and in part from the teachings of the Jewish prophets, whose social ideal is based on class envy and is a kind of leveling communism, according to de Benoist (in expressing these ideas, he relies heavily on quotations from others).

Bernard-Henri Lévy, perhaps the most prominent of the "New Philosophers," gave de Benoist an opportunity to carry this argument further. In his most recent book, *Le Testament de Dieu*, Lévy advances the thesis that only monotheism can serve as a foundation from which to resist totalitarian barbarism. Deeply provoked, the "New Rightist" answered, in an essay titled "Monotheism and Totalitarianism," that the reverse is true: "Monotheism justified morally the destruction of the 'other.' . . . It has been demonstrated not once but one hundred times that the modern totalitarianisms represent secular political transpositions of religious monotheism." De Benoist and Lévy did at least agree that the question indeed remains one of choosing between polytheism and monotheism, Athens or Jerusalem.

AT THIS point one is tempted to remark that Latin Quarter intellectuals get the debates they deserve. But in his criticism of the spiritual descendants of monotheism, de Benoist makes it clear that, at least from the point of view of the "New Right," the debate has wide implications, for these descendants include Communist Russians, democratic Americans, liberals,

capitalists. Like the traditional Right before him, de Benoist dislikes liberalism in particular, holding that it takes a crudely economic view of man and has no other serious reference point. "Liberalism and Marxism were born as the two opposite poles of the same system of economic values."

De Benoist believes this is demonstrated by the similarities between the United States and Russia. But whereas on the latter de Benoist has very little to say, toward the former he expresses a degree of hatred which is surprising and unseemly in this normally polite, if frigid, writer. While his colleagues write of an "American economic imperialism" that threatens the cultural identities of the peoples of Europe, Africa, Asia, and South America, or of "that insidious and efficient and therefore infinitely redoubtable form of totalitarianism that is called bourgeois society," de Benoist, in an essay in which he admits to a weakness for the patriotic North Vietnamese Communists who were fighting for their homeland, denounces the nation he views as a new and monstrous Carthage:

What have the *newcomers* [in English] of the American nation in common, aside from the Bible, the Constitution, a taste for the dollar, and the love of *standing* [in English]? There is a Vietnamese, a Cambodian nation. There cannot be an American nation.

De Benoist finds in America nothing but "vulgarity, egalitarianism, and the commercial spirit." While the two superpowers are equally dangerous for Europe, it is the American threat he has studied the more closely: "From George Washington to Gerald Ford, America has never varied." The pursuit of happiness has thwarted all desire for cultural diversity among Americans, and makes them "kill" all other cultures, which will be replaced by the "dead forms of a civilization without a soul."

The violent hatred of the "New Right" for the United States may be an inheritance from the old Right, with its chauvinism and its envy of the young power that twice in this century saved France from the Huns. Since World War II, the Right has had cause to feel affronted by American policy in Europe: the Suez fiasco in 1956, President Kennedy's support of Algerian independence, more recently American irresolution on international financial and energy issues. But de Benoist's dislike of the U.S. has a deep philosophical basis as well. He despises liberalism in all its forms, and he includes capitalism as one of those forms. Learning on the work of a young Sorbonne philosopher, Claude Polin, he argues that "totalitarianism is the result of the egalitarian spirit and, particularly, of its necessary corollary, the economic spirit." This is why, to him, liberal democracy is no bulwark against totalitarianism.

WITH this, one may end a cursory summary of Alain de Benoist's ideas. There have been only the vaguest of hints

from the "New Right" regarding the kind of self-confident Europe that is to rise out of the debris of "Judeo-Christianity." But one may question how much de Benoist and his friends are truly engaged in building a new culture, when one realizes to what an extent they come out of certain known traditions in France. In fact, it is interesting that despite all the attention the "New Right" has received in the press, little has been said about how very French de Benoist and his friends really are. Much of the press reaction in France has concerned itself with speculation on the personal backgrounds and alleged sinister connections and motivations of the "New Rightists," and this has tended to obscure their intellectual position. Yet as Raymond Aron has pointed out, "If one finds their ideas detestable, one must discuss them, not simply accuse them of racism or anti-Semitism."

Aron himself has found nothing in the writings of the "New Right" that is explicitly anti-Semitic, though he adds sardonically that it is important to pay attention to "what can be read between the lines." To Aron, the essential point about the "New Right" is that it is anti-egalitarian in a manner that ties it to anti-democratic strains in French conservatism. The well-known historian Annie Kriegel (who writes for the daily *Figaro* as well as for *Commentaire* and the Jewish monthly, *L'Arche*), has similarly stressed that it is in the name of liberalism that the "New Right" ought to be opposed.

Younger Jewish intellectuals, notably Shmuel Trigano and Bernard-Henri Lévy, have been less cautious—or more alarmed—in their responses to the "New Right." They see in the use of terminology like "Judeo-Christianity" and "Freudo-Marxism" little more than ways of conforming to French laws regarding racial slander. Guy Hocquenghem, writing in the leftist *Libération*, admitted that the "New Rightists" do not sound like standard right wingers, but concluded nevertheless that he was dealing with racists. De Benoist has defended himself, arguing that his ideas are not "raciphobe" but rather "raciphile": he wants people to develop along lines that are true to themselves, that is all. As a Frenchman, he reserves the right to criticize ideas he considers detrimental to French (or rather European) well-being and development. The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung's* Andreas Oplatka has said that this sounds like a definition of apartheid.*

Raymond Aron and Annie Kriegel are surely correct to warn against crying wolf before the beast is clearly visible. They do not deny there are serious questions to be raised regarding the degree to which racist sentiments may be lurking

* The interest the "New Right" takes in race is closely connected to its interest in heredity. *Eléments*, while castigating attempts to integrate immigrant schoolchildren too rapidly, called for a new educational organization, the "Groupes d'études pour une nouvelle éducation"—or, as it happens, GENE.

behind arguments concerning the biological differences among individuals and peoples, or the repetitive contrasting of "Indo-Europeans" with "Judeo-Christians," but a social scientist does have a right to ask whether biology might contribute usefully to his work, and the "New Rightists" insist that for all their interest in genetics and ethology, they know that what makes man human is culture, not heredity.

And yet their line of argument has precedents in the traditional Right that may be more important than their "new" rhetoric. Since the Church excommunicated the *Action française* in the 20's, there has been an anti-Christian Right in France. This Right has usually been anti-Semitic as well as anti-Christian, and it has sought pagan sources of spirituality. When one takes into account the fact that in contemporary France it causes no great scandal to say nasty things about the Catholic Church, it becomes easier to agree with Catherine Chalié, the author of a perceptive essay on de Benoist and Bernard-Henri Lévy published in *Les Nouveaux Cahiers* (a Jewish quarterly), that behind the code words the Jews are indeed the targets. After all, what is the "New Right" assault on the "alien" infiltration of Europe but the old

Right's dream of a "pure" Europe, now being pressed back into service?

The idea that this old Europe, to be rendered pure again for Europeans, should be for itself alone sounds, indeed, very much like an updated version of Charles Maurras's formula, "*la France seule*." Despite de Benoist's recent discovery of geopolitics, he is advocating, in effect, a European neutralism (based on a French-German alliance), a neutralism that is consistent with his adversary feelings toward France's republican democracy. If he does not express himself with the virulence of Maurras, who maintained that bullets as well as ballots might be used to bring down the Republic, it is clear that he feels liberal democracy is corrupt and not worth defending.

It seems there must always be room for the expression of an anti-democratic persuasion in France, because there is a deep anti-democratic strain in this nation that never quite completed its liberal revolution. For a long time in French intellectual life the anti-democratic strain seemed to be the exclusive property of the Left. The emergence of Alain de Benoist and his "New Right" reminds us that it is equally at home at the other end of the French political spectrum.

The Mysterious Messenger & the Final Solution

Walter Laqueur

IT HAS been known for a long time that the first authentic information about Hitler's decision to destroy European Jewry came from a German industrialist who visited Switzerland in July 1942. But the identity of the industrialist has remained a mystery. What follows is a report of my attempt to trace who he was, what made him act as he did, and what became of him subsequently.

ONE day in July 1942, Benjamin Sagalowitz, the press officer of the Swiss Jewish communities headquartered in Zurich, received an urgent phone call from an acquaintance. Sagalowitz—Benno to his friends—was a man of wide cultural interests, a Social Democrat and a Zionist. He was born in Vitebsk in White Russia, but had come to Switzerland with his family as a young boy just before World War I. His older brother, Vladimir, was a well-known painter and cartoonist. He had many contacts, among them his caller who told him on that day that a German industrialist Sagalowitz had vaguely known in the past was in town, with information of great importance. They then met. The industrialist, a frequent visitor to Switzerland even in wartime, knew from an unimpeachable source that Hitler had decided to have all European Jews exterminated by means of poison gas by the end of the year. Churchill or Roosevelt, preferably both, should be informed immediately.

We cannot be certain that Sagalowitz fully believed the story. He knew the industrialist to be a man of honor and a sworn enemy of the Nazi regime, but he could still be mistaken, as there were a great many rumors in wartime. On the other hand, there were strong indications of anti-Jewish massacres on an unprecedented scale in Nazi-dominated Europe. The news, just received, of the deportation of Jews from Western Europe to Poland certainly pointed in the same direction. During the month of July, notwithstanding the war-

time censorship, some Swiss newspapers had reported that the Jews in Europe were facing certain death. Sagalowitz decided that whether the information was true or half true, no time was to be lost in transmitting it. He got in touch with Gerhart Riegner in Geneva.

Riegner, aged thirty at the time, was the representative of the World Jewish Congress in Switzerland, the main listening post for events in Nazi-occupied Europe. He had studied law in his native Berlin, Heidelberg, Freiburg, and Geneva, and had acquired contacts in all these places during his student days. He was not, however, the only person Sagalowitz could have spoken to. There was also Richard Lichtheim, Riegner's senior by many years, who reported from Geneva to the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem. But it was Riegner who had a direct connection with Rabbi Stephen Wise in New York, who in turn had entry to the White House. In the circumstances, the decision to contact Riegner rather than Lichtheim must have seemed self-evident to Sagalowitz.

What happened next has been related more than once. Having received the news from Sagalowitz, Riegner waited for about a week, trying to obtain more information about the reliability of the source. He was helped by his old teacher at the Institute des Hautes Etudes in Geneva, Paul Guggenheim (Guggi). His usual American contact in Geneva, U.S. Consul Paul C. Squire, happened to be away and so on August 8, Riegner went to see the Vice Consul, Howard Elting, Jr., and handed him a document which began as follows:

Received alarming report that in Fuehrer's headquarters plan discussed and under consideration according to which all Jews in countries occupied or controlled by Germany numbering $3\frac{1}{2}$ -4 million should after deportation and concentration in East be exterminated at one blow to resolve once and for all Jewish question in Europe.

Elting sent the message to Ambassador Leland Harrison in Berne, who transmitted it to the State Department with a note that this was apparently a wild rumor inspired by Jewish fears. Reaction in Washington was even more negative, and it was decided not to convey the message to Rabbi Wise for whom it had been intended. But Riegner had

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taken the precaution of sending a copy through the British embassy to the London office of the World Jewish Congress. The Foreign Office in London was also unhappy about the telegram, regarding it as grossly exaggerated and in any case not helpful to the war effort. But after some initial hesitation it was handed over to the World Jewish Congress, and thus Rabbi Wise in New York got it finally on August 28, 1942.

Wise was asked by the State Department not to make the message public; there was no certainty that it was correct. After all, Riegner had said in his cable, "We transmit information with all necessary reservation as exactitude cannot [be] confirmed." Rabbi Wise and the other Jewish leaders accepted this. It took three more months to establish that the Riegner cable was correct, and indeed had not gone far enough. Hitler's plan was not just "under consideration," it was already being carried out.

I AM not the only one to have been intrigued by the question of the identity of the industrialist who brought Sagalowitz the news. Riegner, who gave his word not to divulge the man's name, has been asked about the matter countless times but has steadfastly refused to respond. The other two who had known the man's identity, Sagalowitz and Ambassador Harrison, are dead. Actually, Harrison had never met the industrialist, but upon his insistence Riegner had given him the name in a closed envelope. The OSS (Office of Strategic Services) had also been informed. Riegner himself did not meet the industrialist until February 1945, according to Sagalowitz.

My search among Harrison's papers in Washington produced no results. As for the relevant OSS files, if they still exist they have not been declassified. Some of Sagalowitz's papers are kept in the archives of the Swiss Jewish communities in Zurich which I visited recently. Again the search proved fruitless; Sagalowitz's private correspondence was not there. I then got in touch with Howard Elting, Jr., the Vice Consul whom Riegner had first contacted upon receiving the horrible news. He is now retired in California. He assured me that he had never known the name. One of Sagalowitz's friends, a man once actively involved in Swiss politics, was most interested in my search but he could be of no help either.

Why did the industrialist insist on anonymity even after the war? He had performed, after all, a humanitarian service at great personal danger. ("He risked his skin for us," Riegner wrote in one of his letters to me.) It was not his fault that his initiative had not resulted in the rescue of many Jews. Either he must have been a man of rare modesty, or other factors were involved. When Riegner had first tried to establish whether his source, whose identity he still did not know, could be trusted, he had been assured by Sagalowitz that

the industrialist had supplied important (and reliable) information to the Allies on at least two previous occasions. He had told them that Russia would be attacked in 1941, and he also knew early on about some impending changes in the German high command. Where could Sagalowitz himself have come by such knowledge concerning the reliability of the industrialist? Obviously, only from a secret service; but, I reasoned, any such organization would be unlikely to endanger a valuable source just to provide a recommendation. (In this I was wrong.)

I then found out that Riegner's famous cable had been published in America in a Jewish weekly, together with all the other details he knew—that the industrialist was the head of a big enterprise employing some 30,000 workers and that he had given important help to the Allies by, among other things, informing them about Operation Barbarossa (*Congress Weekly*, December 4, 1942). This, too, seemed altogether incredible. Surely Riegner would not have made these details known if they were true. They would have been more than sufficient for the Gestapo to trace this traitor to Nazi Germany. Thus it came to seem that the description of the "industrialist" must have been a cover.

At this stage friends drew my attention to the introduction to the Hebrew edition of Arthur D. Morse's *While Six Million Died*, in which one Artur Sommer is mentioned as the individual who had passed on the information. This name had already been suggested by Dr. Pazner (Posner), who was connected during the war with the Jewish Agency in Switzerland, but Riegner had denied in a letter to me that Sommer had anything to do with the affair. Yet surely there must have been some connection, the name could not have been plucked out of thin air.

I followed this lead without great hope, but with surprising results. Sommer had been on the outer fringe of the Stefan George Circle, an exclusive group of admirers of that highly esoteric German poet and translator, a circle which included quite a few Jews and also some anti-Semites. Born in Krotoschin, in the Polish-German borderland in 1889, Sommer studied languages and literature in Berlin and served with distinction as an officer in World War I. A tall man of powerful physique and with a booming voice, he was a first-rate commander. But like many of his contemporaries he did not easily find his way back to civilian life after the war. He decided to continue his studies in a very different field, economics, and since he was a thorough man and easily sidetracked, this took him some fifteen years. He became fascinated by the works of Friedrich List (d. 1847), the most original of the German economic thinkers of his time, a prophet of industrialization and a critic of laissez-faire liberalism.

Sommer decided to devote his life to this neglected genius; he was instrumental in founding a List Society (which still exists) and discovered some

unknown manuscripts of the master in Paris archives. Through his interest in List he came into touch with Edgar Salin, another devotee of the George Circle. Salin, a figure better known than Sommer in German intellectual history, was born into a Frankfurt Jewish family in 1892. He was professor first in Heidelberg and then in 1927 in Basel. Sommer decided to complete his dissertation in Basel under Salin's direction; in the process the two became close friends. In 1931, Sommer moved to London to continue his studies, and two years later, still in London, for reasons not altogether clear, he joined the Nazi party. (It ought to be mentioned in passing that other young members of the George Circle such as Claus Schenk von Stauffenberg, who tried to kill Hitler in 1944, were also very much attracted by the Nazis in the beginning.)

WHEN Sommer returned to Germany in 1933 he was asked to participate in storm-trooper activities. What he saw he did not like, and described his impressions in a letter to a friend. The letter was intercepted. Sommer was arrested and spent several months in a concentration camp. After his release he worked as a librarian since he could no longer hope for an academic career and there was always the danger of renewed arrest. He figured correctly that he would be safest in the army, and (what with his World War I record) was immediately accepted. Attached to the general staff, he became a lieutenant colonel and served as one of the liaison officers with the *Abwehr*, the military intelligence.

In view of his training as an economist, Sommer was appointed a member of the German trade delegation to Switzerland, which met periodically to review the commercial treaty between the two countries. Beginning in September 1940, he frequently visited Switzerland and came to see Salin. In February 1941, he told his friend that negotiations with Russia were not going well. In September or October 1941, Sommer sent Salin pictures showing Nazi atrocities in Eastern Europe, with the request that he pass them on to the Papal Nuncio in Berne, Monsignor Bernardini. This the professor did. The Vatican, needless to say, made no use of this material.*

In 1942 Salin found in his mailbox a letter from Sommer to the effect that extermination camps had been prepared in Eastern Europe to kill all European Jews and also most Soviet prisoners of war by poison gas. Sommer requested that the information be directly relayed to Churchill and Roosevelt and also suggested that the British Broadcasting Corporation transmit daily warnings. Salin did not know how to reach Churchill, but he got in touch with Thomas McKittrick, the American president of the Bank for International Settlement which was located in Basel. McKittrick was in close contact with Ambassador Leland Harrison, who, in turn was in a position to convey

messages to the White House. Salin did not know but may have suspected that McKittrick also had private channels for getting information to Washington. He was a well-informed man, there were German employees in his bank, and leading members of the German opposition, such as Adam Trott zu Solz, visited him occasionally. From time to time he was debriefed by Washington. There is an interesting long report about his impressions and views in the files of the OSS. According to McKittrick, Sommer's message was passed on to Washington. I have not been able to find a copy; it may have disappeared, it may not have been sent. There was in any case no response.

Sommer also tried to get a few Jewish acquaintances out of Germany in the middle of the war; among them was the aged mother of the medievalist Ernst Kantorowicz. This happened the day after the flight of General Giraud from a German prisoner-of-war camp. All border guards were on special alert; approaching the Swiss border, the old lady fell into a hole, and was apprehended. Miraculously she survived the war in Theresienstadt. Sommer, just as miraculously, came to no harm in the various extensive purges of the *Abwehr* during the last year of the war. After the Nazi defeat he resumed his academic career, this time with greater success. He was offered a teaching position in Heidelberg and continued to publish on List; his lectures were well attended, and since he was an excellent teacher he was asked to continue as guest lecturer even after having reached retirement age. He died in 1965, aged seventy-six.

ARTHUR SOMMER had been one of the early warners but clearly not the one I had been looking for. There still was the possibility that the "industrialist" was not an industrialist at all but a Swiss diplomat or businessman, or perhaps a leading member of one of the international organizations based in Switzerland, or even a German diplomat. I turned my attention to these various categories.

It was unlikely that a Swiss citizen would have heard about a secret decision in Hitler's headquarters, but the possibility could not be ruled out—a German friend or business associate might have told him. German officials were not as discreet as is usually believed. Thus, the head of the press section in the propaganda ministry had drunkenly announced at a party at the Bulgarian embassy in April 1941 that he would soon go to the Crimea as *Gauleiter*. He did eventually go to the Crimea, but as a private in the army, and were it not for Goebbels's intervention he would have been shot.

* I am following, more or less, Salin's account written after the war. Salin died in Basel in 1974. He may not have known everything about his friend Sommer, who apparently forgot to tell him that he remained a member of the Nazi party after the "misunderstanding" of 1933. But this is of no great importance in the present context.

If even a state secret of such magnitude could not be kept, small wonder that news of the Final Solution was quite widespread.

Key officials in the German foreign ministry were told what was going on. Ten progress reports, replete with statistics about the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen* in killing Jews, were published during the last few months of 1941. Each referred to so many Jews killed that in the end no one knew how many had actually been murdered. A junior official, Fritz Gebhardt von Hahn, was appointed to provide a statistical summary. He calculated that about 70,000 to 80,000 had been liquidated by each "killer unit." Since there were several such units in each of the four major *Einsatzgruppen*, Hahn's figures were actually in excess of the gruesome reality. These reports were sent to various desks in the political division and were initiated by twenty-two different people. They were seen by more, and the number of those orally informed was probably in the hundreds. But while the fact that there had been massacres on an unprecedented scale was widely known, the fact that there was an order by Hitler to destroy all of European Jewry was a top secret (*Geheime Reichssache*) and was known only to a very few officials in July 1942.

Were German diplomats in Switzerland aware of such an order, and would they have passed the news on? This seems just barely possible. Some German diplomats in Switzerland were quite critical of the Nazi regime. But they were located in Geneva rather than in Berne or Zurich, and Sagalowitz had apparently no contact with them. Nor was he in close touch with the representative of the Vatican in Switzerland, Monsignor Bernardini, who showed more sympathy to the Jews in their misfortune than did the Curia in Rome or the Nuncio in Berlin, who was little more than a pliant tool in the hands of the Nazis. Bernardini had excellent sources of information about events in Nazi-occupied Europe, especially among the exiled Poles who still had a legation in Berne. But Sagalowitz was not among Bernardini's close acquaintances.

Until recently there has been no access to the files of the International Red Cross, and as far as I have been able to ascertain the IRC had no direct firsthand evidence concerning these matters. It had no permanent representation in Eastern Europe, its activities were strictly circumscribed. In Germany it had to operate through the German Red Cross, but this was an unlikely source of information since those in charge of it, leading SS physicians, were hardly the kind of people to confide in the Swiss visitors. Still, the delegates of the IRC and its executives were not totally uninformed. They did travel, and some of them had excellent contacts high up in the German army and in German officialdom.

A key figure here was Carl Burckhardt, the "foreign minister" of the IRC, who hailed from a pa-

trician Basel family. He had made a reputation for himself as a diplomat and historian, and a friend of literature and the arts. In October 1942, he told American diplomats that he too had heard about Hitler's order. On November 7, he saw Paul Squire, the U.S. Consul in Geneva, and assured him that while he had not actually seen the order, he could confirm "privately and not for publication" that Hitler had signed an order in 1941 that before the end of 1942 Germany must be free of Jews. He had received this piece of information independently from two very well informed Germans, one a German foreign ministry official, the other someone inside the war ministry. Squire asked whether the word extermination was used; Burckhardt replied that the text said *judenfrei*—free of Jews—but since there was no place to send the Jews, and since the territory must be cleared, it was obvious what the result would be.

Burckhardt, then, could have been my source, but in this case the information would not have come by way of Sagalowitz, who hardly knew him personally. Burckhardt's contact was through Professor Guggenheim.

THERE was yet another international organization in Geneva, smaller and less well known than the International Red Cross, and this was the World Council of Churches headed by Visser't Hooft. Visser't Hooft was a churchman and a Dutch patriot, and did what he could to help his country and its allies during the war. He himself could not travel in Nazi-occupied Europe but some of his closest collaborators did, among them Nils Ehrenstroem, a Swede, and Hans Schoenfeld, a German who had close contacts with the resistance. Visser't Hooft knew early on about the fate of the Jews. In October 1941, he received extremely alarming reports about the mass deportations:

I must confess [he later wrote in his memoirs] that it took several months before the information received entered fully into my consciousness. That moment occurred when I heard a young Swiss businessman tell what he had seen with his own eyes during a business trip to Russia. He had been invited by German officers to be present at one of the mass killings of Jews. He told us in the most straightforward and realistic way how group after group of Jewish men, women, and children was forced to lie down in the mass graves and was then machine-gunned to death. . . . From that moment onward I had no longer any excuse for shutting my mind to information which could find no place in my view of the world and humanity.

Visser't Hooft also received direct and indirect information from dissident elements within the German Protestant Church. One of them was Dietrich Bonhoeffer who came to visit him from time to time in the guise of an agent of the *Abwehr* (a so-called V man). Admiral Canaris himself, the

head of military intelligence, helped to smuggle a small group of Jewish friends to Switzerland during the war, in collaboration with the church. (These men and their families, to be sure, had converted to Protestantism, but they would have been sent to Auschwitz anyway.) The role of the World Council of Churches in these and other activities remains to be explored. It certainly was one of the channels of information, although probably not the one to Sagalowitz.

Sagalowitz was a writer and journalist. Perhaps the source had been another journalist? I received letters from two of my Swiss acquaintances, both now in retirement, who during the war had been in key positions at leading newspapers. One of them said he doubted he could help me but did remember having been visited in July 1942 by Ernst Lemmer, a newspaperman from Berlin who had discussed with him the fate of the Jews. The second letter also referred to Lemmer. By accident I discovered that the Swiss political police had also had its eye on Lemmer as a source of information and, possibly, disinformation.

Ernst Lemmer was not just a newspaperman from Berlin; he had played a role of some importance in German politics before 1933. As a very young man he had been one of the founding members of the Liberal Democratic party, and later, in 1924, he became the youngest member of the Reichstag. He was not a great speaker or charismatic leader but a man of charm and some organizational ability. He was also secretary general of the (non-socialist) German trade-union movement.

When Hitler came to power there was an extensive purge of politicians of the Weimar Republic but miraculously Lemmer was allowed to become a correspondent, not of course for German newspapers but for the foreign press. As an ex-liberal he was eminently suited to stress the moderate character and the positive achievements of Nazism. Lemmer worked for a Hungarian German-language daily, for *Le Soir* of Brussels (after the occupation of Belgium), and for some Swiss newspapers. His writings in these years, despite the absence of blatant propaganda, make for embarrassing reading; he had obviously made his peace with the regime, although he did not admire it.

The editor of a Swiss newspaper who visited Berlin in February 1941 told me recently that Lemmer had informed him that Yugoslavia and Greece would soon be occupied by German troops. This would be followed by the invasion of Africa, which would be completed by May. The Soviet Union would be invaded in June, and it would collapse in six weeks. "Dear friend," Lemmer told his Swiss guest, "a German victory is unfortunately inevitable. . . ." When the Swiss editor retorted that England and America were still undefeated, Lemmer said that England hardly counted, and the Americans, being good businessmen, would surely realize the point of coming to terms

with the Germans. Lemmer played a complicated double game. On the one hand, he would glorify German victories in Russia, on the other hand, he was often quite outspokenly critical of the Nazi regime in conversations with foreign visitors. I have it on the authority of a traveling companion of his that during a tour conducted by the ministry of propaganda to the Eastern front in late 1941, at an advanced hour and in a state of some drunkenness, Lemmer sang the *Internationale* in a loud voice, accompanying himself on the piano, much to the consternation of the attending Nazi dignitaries.

LEMMER had been one of the first to inform journalists and other acquaintances abroad about the Final Solution. He regularly spent his summer holidays in Switzerland during the war. In July 1942, he met several public figures in Zurich and told them about gas chambers, stationary and mobile, in which Jews were killed. Lemmer found it incomprehensible that the Allies kept silent and that no attempt was made to arouse world opinion. A leading Swiss journalist who heard Lemmer in July 1942 later summarized his impressions for me as follows:

He doubtless had the intention to inform me but was probably also guided by other motives. There was an overall strategy behind these approaches, namely, to provoke the Allies to become more strongly committed on behalf of the Jews despite the fact that they were powerless to do anything for them. German propaganda would have exploited this to the maximum: "British and American soldiers are fighting and dying to save the Jews!" The Nazis always believed that if only they could use the Jewish question as a bone of contention they would be able to undermine the fighting spirit of the British and American soldiers. Some German circles wanted to keep the Final Solution secret, while others on the contrary were interested for a number of devious reasons in informing the Allies.

Thus far my Swiss informant. Whether his interpretation is correct or not, it is certainly understandable that Lemmer was received in Switzerland with a great deal of suspicion. He was known, after all, as part of the German propaganda machine. As to his real motives there can be only speculation. He may have been genuinely shocked by the murder of the Jews; perhaps he knew that he was being used by his employers but reasoned that their own calculations were wrong and that it was essential to bring the Final Solution to the notice of neutrals and Allies alike, whatever the consequences.

This was not to be my only encounter with Lemmer in my investigations. As I tried to find out when the Hungarian government had first learned of the Final Solution, the experts told me that the earliest information was passed on by

Sztojaj, the Hungarian Ambassador to Berlin (and a rabid anti-Semite) who told it to Gyorgi Ottlik, a visiting Hungarian parliamentarian, in August or September 1942. After his return to Budapest, Ottlik wrote a memorandum which he handed to the foreign ministry. According to Ottlik, Sztojaj was all in favor of at least a token deportation of Jews to Poland, and while he did not define the Final Solution, he did not conceal its meaning either.

The Ottlik report left a number of unanswered questions. I was told that it was not Sztojaj's habit to use precise language in such delicate matters as the extermination of Jews; more important yet, Ottlik was not particularly close to the politics of the Berlin Ambassador. Ottlik had resigned in 1935 from the semi-official *Budapesti Hirlap* precisely because he resented the pro-German, pro-Italian line of the new Gombos government, of which Sztojaj was a leading supporter. But this had been seven years earlier, and meanwhile Ottlik, a cautious pro-Westerner, had become editor-in-chief of the *Pester Lloyd*. The representative in Berlin of this German-language daily was none other than Ernst Lemmer. If Lemmer talked about the Final Solution to Swiss colleagues with whom he was not very intimate, it is likely that he talked about it with his own boss—four weeks after his return from Zurich.*

Lemmer resumed his political career after the war; he had never been a member of the Nazi party and he had, after all, a democratic past. One of the founders of the Christian Democratic party in the Eastern zone, he became its deputy chairman in 1947. Initially his relations with the Soviet authorities were not at all bad, but in the wake of the purge of 1948 he was deposed from the leadership of his party. He became the head of the Christian Democratic party in the regional West Berlin parliament, and from 1956 to 1965 served in the Bonn federal government as minister for communications and later for all-German questions. Before his death in 1970 he published an autobiography in which he referred neither to his warnings about the Final Solution—perhaps he had forgotten about them—nor to his activities in behalf of the *Pester Lloyd*. He did say, however, that it had been Nazi policy to use the media to sow distrust and dissension among the Allies. "Hitler's enemies, after all, behaved in the same way." Lemmer also wrote that neutral correspondents and even those from satellite countries were not taken in by such manipulations. Opportunist, resister, survivor—it is not easy to say with any certainty what Lemmer really believed at any given time. It was a case not at all untypical of the dangerous times in which he lived.

Now I knew that the warnings had come in 1942 from more than one source. But it had also emerged that neither Sommer nor Lemmer was the "industrialist" who had

informed Sagalowitz and through him Riegner. It occurred to me that the industrialist must have needed a visa to go to Switzerland—but the files of the Swiss legation in Berlin had been destroyed. The Swiss were most helpful; I was, I believe, one of the first foreigners to be given the run of their state archives in Berne. But I was also told that the records of the border police no longer existed, the political police had opened some files about visitors but not others. Since I did not even know for whom I was looking I could not ask a more specific question, and I am not sure whether I would have been helped on an issue of such delicacy.

What other leads existed? There was a German Chamber of Commerce in Switzerland and it published reports and a periodical which showed that many hundreds of German firms had dealings with Switzerland during the war. Furthermore, there were mixed German-Swiss firms; some of the biggest enterprises had branches in Germany and vice versa. There was Bosch, the great electrical concern; some of its directors had been in contact with the German resistance, and had also been to Switzerland. There was the AEG and the aluminum combine, the Metallgesellschaft, the Maschinenfabrik Augsburg-Nuernberg, and many others. I made a few inquiries in business circles and found them not always helpful; my investigation (they obviously feared) was likely to result in publicity of dubious value.

I then tried to find out more about the representatives of international Jewish institutions active at the time in Geneva and Zurich; perhaps one of them had known about the mystery man. Richard Lichtheim and Dr. Silberschein, who had been in charge of relations with Poland, were no longer alive. Dr. Pazner (Posner), as I have already mentioned, who had been in Geneva during the war and now lives in Jerusalem, at one time believed that Sommer had conveyed the information. I located a Nathan Schwalb in Switzerland; he had kept in touch with Jewish youth organizations all over occupied Europe during the war, and his correspondence of those years is thought to be a most important historical source. Unfortunately it is not yet accessible to historians. One day in New York I told the head of a Jewish institution about my search. He put me in touch with his father-in-law in Miami, Dr. Julius Kuehl. Dr. Kuehl had come to Switzerland from Poland to study economics in the late 1920's and had married a local girl. During the war he was assistant to Alexander Lados, the Polish diplomatic envoy in Berne, and he also played ping-pong with Monsignor Bernardini. I talked to him at length and learned some details which were useful to my work

* Following my investigation into Ottlik I learned that this was by no means the first time that official Budapest had been told about the fate of the Jews. The earliest information arrived, in fact, six weeks after the Wannsee Conference (in March 1942). But this is another story.

in general, but about the industrialist he knew nothing.

I then retraced my steps. According to both Riegner and Sagalowitz, the German industrialist had provided information about Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union—Operation Barbarossa. Thanks to the painstaking research of Burton Whaley we now know that Stalin had warnings about the impending attack from at least eighty sources (and probably many more of which we will never know) but disregarded all of them. This most suspicious of political leaders detected imaginary dangers everywhere; facing real danger he was quite obtuse.

Had the industrialist been in touch with British or American intelligence? I thought British more probable; the OSS did not even exist in early 1941. (There was a third and a fourth possibility but they did not occur to me until much later.) The SIS (Special Intelligence Service) was the British agency most likely to have been involved; the names of its representatives in wartime Switzerland are known but they have not so far published their memoirs. A mass of British documents on World War II has been released during the last year or two and is now available in the Public Record Office at Kew. It is housed in a spacious place, but the relevant material is not easy to locate. Sensitive information has been carefully weeded out; some will be released only after the year 2000, some will probably never be accessible or has been destroyed. True, even the most conscientious censors are likely to commit an oversight from time to time. I have benefited from a few, but there have not been very many.

Another significant source of information is the first volume of the official history of British intelligence in World War II published last year; it goes up to June 1941. (The second volume, for my purposes of even greater interest, seems to have been postponed because someone in the British cabinet office has raised objections to the publication of certain material.) Volume one reports that an SIS operative in Geneva had indeed received a warning in March 1941 that the invasion of the Soviet Union would take place on or about May 20. This was close enough—the invasion in fact took place on June 21, but only because Hitler's timetable had been upset. But the history does not mention names, certainly not names hitherto unknown, and there is no way of finding out who in Geneva provided this interesting information.

I did not expect to find much of importance for the purpose of my study in the National Archives in Washington. But by mere chance I came across a memorandum written by L.H. (Leland Harrison), the American Ambassador in Berne, one of the three (or four) people who had known the identity of the industrialist. The memorandum dealt with one Sam Woods, Consul General in Zurich. The memo, probably

written for the benefit of Allen Dulles, said that Woods had been visited by a German citizen, one Schweizer (a cover name, Woods had forgotten his real name). Schweizer called on Woods ostensibly to discuss a patent but really to find out why a commercial attaché (for such was Woods's function) should have the rank of a Consul General.

Schweizer had been an air-force officer in World War I and was married to a Swiss woman. He came to see Woods again, and again his questions seemed somewhat unusual. Schweizer's boss, a Dr. Gerdes, head of the Pinch factory in Berlin ("not a member of the Nazi party, married to a Russian lady"), also happened to be in Zurich at the time. The Pinch factory (Woods wrote) was working on a counter to the submarine detector. Woods had also been visited by Hans Herjquist from Hamburg, Baroness Rothkirchen, a Mr. Kurzhals, and others. They all wanted to know the reasons for his appointment to Zurich.

Consul General Woods was clearly a popular man, but even so his many contacts with German citizens in the middle of the war seemed extraordinary. But as I soon discovered, Sam Edison Woods was an unusual case. He was fifty at the time, a native of Starrville, Texas, the son of a lumberman and mill operator. He had been educated in small colleges in Indiana, Wisconsin, and for a year at MIT, served in the aviation section of the Marine Corps in World War I, and then worked (as a civilian) for the U.S. army in Czechoslovakia. He also constructed and supervised playgrounds for the Czech government. Then he returned to the U.S. as supervisor of rehabilitation for the Mississippi Department of Education. In 1929 he joined the State Department and was made assistant grade commissioner and later commercial attaché in Czechoslovakia. He left Prague in 1937 and for the next four years was commercial attaché in Berlin. He traveled a great deal, for he also served as supervisor of the foreign establishments of the Department of Commerce.

I asked three of Sam Woods's contemporaries at the Berlin embassy, George Kennan and Jacob Beam (both future Ambassadors to Moscow) and Francis Cunningham, what they remembered of him. He certainly was not an intellectual, Kennan said, which if anything was an understatement. If he knew any German, he did not know much. Others told me that he created the impression of having not the slightest interest in politics. Yet the backwoodsman from Texas was the most successful U.S. intelligence collector during World War II.

One contact whom Woods used to meet in a darkened Berlin cinema gave him detailed information about the cancellation of Operation Sea Lion—the invasion of Great Britain—and about the preparation of the attack against the Soviet Union. The material included a copy of Hitler's "Directive Twenty One," the details of the strategic plans for Operation Barbarossa. This was

passed on to Washington where Breckinridge Long, Assistant Secretary of State, called it "the most important document that has arrived in the Department of State, certainly since the war began." (Long was to play an unfortunate role suppressing information from Riegner and others about the Holocaust.) The document was taken by Cordell Hull to President Roosevelt after Hermann Bruening, the former German Chancellor, had vouched for its authenticity. The British were informed and eventually also Stalin—who did not, of course, believe it, regarding it as just another Anglo-American fabrication to stir up bad blood between him and the Germans.

Woods was acting on his own initiative; there was no U.S. intelligence service at the time, and the chargé d'affaires did not encourage political reporting. Even Woods's closest colleagues were not aware of his activities. One of his main informants was Herwarth von Bittenfeld, a young diplomat who had joined the army in 1939, and was to serve his country after the war as Ambassador to Britain.* There were others, such as Dr. Erwin Respondek, a figure about whom much less is known. All I could find out about him is that he was born in 1894, studied economics, became an expert on European trade and reparations worked for a while in the foreign ministry and for a short while represented the Catholic Center party in the Reichstag. In 1940 he was employed by the German mint and thus was told early on about the need to print occupation money for Russia.

WHEN, after Pearl Harbor and Hitler's declaration of war, the U.S. embassy was closed down, Woods and his diplomatic colleagues were detained for several months in Bad Nauheim, a German spa. After the diplomats had been exchanged via Lisbon, Woods was reassigned to Zurich and almost immediately resumed his contacts with German acquaintances. Astonishing messages arrived at the State Department. He was the first to report the magnetic bomb and the trailer-transport airplane, and in May 1943 he informed the State Department "about a German process—it seems now more than an experiment—to use uranium powder in connection with split atoms in a compound explosive of alleged incredible violence. Woods is reporting on it and following it as closely as he is able" (Long, *War Diary* for May 19, 1943). This was the first time the State Department heard about uranium from any source, and it "looked askance" at the report, just as it had the year before on the report about the Jews. General Strong of military intelligence, who was called in for consultation, was "immediately and seriously interested," however. Vannevar Bush was also consulted, and Woods was sent a top-priority cable to find out as much as he could.

What happened next is not entirely clear to this

day. According to the Dictionary of National Biography, Woods supplied information which led to the destruction of the "heavy-water plant at Peenemuende" by the RAF, thus preventing Germany from continuing its researches into atomic science and halting the German atomic-bomb project. But the German bomb had been given low priority by Hitler in any case, and while Peenemuende was a key plant for missiles, it had nothing to do with atomic research. Information about Peenemuende had come from various sources such as a Danish engineer and the famous "Oslo report," which was conveyed to the Allies from a source still unknown. Sam Woods may have been one of these sources but even this is not certain.

The exceptional consul did play a leading role in getting several hundred U.S. airmen out of Switzerland. They were interned in a camp near Lucerne, and would call him by twos and threes from a nearby phone booth, announcing themselves as alumni of Washington University. Woods would drive to Lucerne, go to a church, take a seat in the rear, pray, cough, drop a handkerchief as a sign of identification, walk out, and the pilots would follow him. He would then drive them to Zurich in his car, put them up in his apartment or a private hospital rented for this purpose. Then they would be supplied with forged papers and leave Switzerland. This was in 1944 and it can be taken for granted that the Swiss police were looking the other way.

As I went over the extraordinary career of Sam Woods it emerged that members of the U.S. embassy in Berlin had had contacts with the German Jewish community to the very end. But German Jews did not know about the Final Solution at the time. How much did those at the embassy know? The diplomats (to cite George Kennan) assumed that those who were deported were facing conditions of confinement which a great many of them could not be expected to survive. They did not know that they faced deliberate wholesale murder. But there was also information about massacres affecting hundreds of thousands. U.S. correspondents in Berlin, such as Fred Oechsner, head of the United Press bureau, were taken to the Russian front by the German army; from Oechsner's dispatches from Odessa a picture of mass murder emerges. It is unlikely that Oechsner would have failed to inform his colleagues after his return to Berlin. Nor was he the only source. W. Russell (who knew Woods well) mentions

* Von Bittenfeld had joined the diplomatic service in 1927. He served as Second Secretary in Moscow in 1939 and kept the Americans regularly informed about the progress of the Nazi-Soviet rapprochement in spring and summer of that year. According to Charles Bohlen, who was his main contact in the U.S. embassy, Von Bittenfeld ("Johnny") was one-quarter Jewish and an early member of the anti-Hitler resistance ("A Source in the Nazi Embassy," in C. Bohlen, *Witness to History*, 1973).

that he received photographs of groups of Jews about to be executed, forced to dig their own graves. After Pearl Harbor, Oechsner went to Washington and joined OSS. (One of his first recruits was a young newspaperman named Richard Helms, who had worked under him for United Press in Berlin.)

The story of Sam Woods, who died in Munich in 1953, has not been written and perhaps never will be, because the consul did not believe in making notes or leaving records. More information about his astonishing contacts will undoubtedly surface in time, and this may also shed light on what he knew about the fate of the Jews. That he knew earlier than most seems beyond reasonable doubt: but whether he and his superiors attributed importance to the news is a different question altogether.

THE preoccupation with Sam Woods seemed to be of no help in my search for the "industrialist." But this case demonstrated again how much information had been collected and passed along not by professional agents but by freelance volunteers who did not belong to any organization. If so, it seemed possible that the story of the industrialist was *not* a cover, that he really existed, but that neither his colleagues nor perhaps even his family knew about his secret activities. And was it not also possible that the identification which Riegner had conveyed to his superiors in America and which they had mistakenly published somehow escaped the attention of the Gestapo, which was after all far from omniscient? But this would mean that it would be all the more difficult to identify him, simply because he had confided in no one but his few contacts abroad, of whom all but one were no longer alive.

One item in Riegner's account had bothered me from the beginning. The industrialist was said to have employed 30,000 workers in his factory. This was not impossible. There were a few enterprises of that magnitude in Germany: Siemens, AEG, Bosch, and some metal and chemical factories. But it was unlikely that the owner or chief manager of one of these would visit Switzerland several times a year. How could such frequent trips be justified? Switzerland did not supply essential raw materials to Germany, nor was there much export trade from Germany. The enterprise, rather, would have had to be smaller; the emphasis on the thousands of workers employed meant that the name of the factory was not a household word.

In what kind of industry was the chief executive likely to hear state secrets? Hardly in a firm producing soup extracts, sewing machines, or even pharmaceuticals. More likely in heavy industry (but there was not much of that in Switzerland), perhaps in chemicals or precision instruments. But this was no more than speculation. Anyone with friends in high places might have been told the news by July 1942, and some in fact did hear by

accident. There was the case of Guenther Prey, another industrialist, who discovered by chance in Danzig in early 1942 that Jews were being killed by gassing.* In short, it could have been almost anyone. And if, as it seemed, he had kept silent after the war, I would probably never find him.

Then it occurred to me that there had been yet another man, whom I had forgotten: the original go-between with Sagalowitz. Who was he and why had he kept silent? Switzerland is a small country. The unknown man in the middle was a Swiss citizen, and if the industrialist had provided important information before, chances are that he had informed the Swiss authorities. Or had he perhaps been acting on their behalf in the first place? Equally, it would have been Sagalowitz's duty to inform Swiss intelligence about his contacts with foreigners; this was, after all, the proper thing for a loyal citizen to do in 1942.

But this reasoning did not get me far; the Swiss are no more in the habit of revealing their secrets than are other nations. But there are always leaks, and in the course of my search I came across a little book which seemed at first unpromising.

The author, Sergeant Mueller, was a noncommissioned officer in Swiss army intelligence who had been in business in Berlin up to 1940. He had many contacts with Germans but soon quarrelled with his superiors, who begrudged him his success. Twenty years after the war, Sergeant Mueller published his recollections, mentioning many of his sources without, however, identifying them by name. But among these descriptions of German visitors to wartime Switzerland it was not difficult to recognize some of those I had already encountered on previous occasions. Certain embellishments and exaggerations apart, the book seemed authentic. It seemed likely that Sergeant Mueller had been in touch with my industrialist.

BEFORE proceeding with my investigations I tried to find out more about Sergeant Mueller, who had signed his reports "Qn." How reliable was he? I was aware by now that in this murky world, facts were seldom straightforward, and answers usually raised new questions. It did not take long to find out that "Qn" had been a reliable source indeed, only that his name was not Mueller, but Dr. Johann Conrad Meyer, the economic correspondent of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* in Berlin from 1936 up to the time the Nazis asked him to leave, in March 1940. He had taken a degree in public law from Leipzig University in 1931 with a dissertation on the legal position of Basel in the Swiss confederation in the Middle Ages. But subsequently his interest shifted to more topical concerns; he became a journalist and still later an economic consultant.

* This is mentioned in Louis de Jong's magisterial study, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de tweede Wereldoorlog*, Vol. 7, Part 1, Hague, 1976.

Dr. Meyer died in the late 60's. The book of his reminiscences had been written by an acquaintance, Kurt Emmenegger, also of Zurich. Should one make a search among his papers? Emmenegger had his doubts, for Meyer had not been in the habit of putting on paper the names of his sources. But there was an even weightier reason; after Meyer's death the Swiss police had seized his files and removed them to Berne. Then I received a piece of information which, while very intriguing, confused the whole issue even further. Dr. Meyer had signed his reports not "Qn" but "Sx," and this, I was told, stood for SIMEX, a somewhat unusual name which sounded more like a firm than an individual. It was indeed the name of a corporation, albeit a spurious one, the bogus enterprise established by the *Rote Kapelle* ("Red Orchestra") during the war in Paris and Brussels as a cover for its activities.

The *Rote Kapelle* did not engage in music but was the most important Soviet spy ring in Europe during World War II. Dr. Meyer, I was told, had confirmed in conversation that some of his informants had also been in contact with the *Rote Kapelle*. Meyer himself, I learned from another source, had been in touch with Alexander Rado and Otto Puender, who had been running the Soviet intelligence network in Switzerland during the war.

These were interesting new perspectives, but there was now the danger that I would get lost in the byways of international intelligence networks. More than once I did in fact get lost, believing that I had at long last located my industrialist only to realize that I had followed a false trail. I tried to imagine the kind of man who would accept the great risk of passing on such dangerous information in wartime. Obviously, he had to have been a man of firm beliefs, deeply convinced of the evil character of the Nazi regime, repelled by its inhuman actions. Would he have made a secret of his convictions? Possibly, but there was no certainty. I thought of him as a man who had seen a great deal of the world, and was in a position to compare, but also a person unlikely to attract attention, someone about whom even his closest collaborators, when faced with the evidence would say: "Old S. could never have done it. . . . True, he made a critical remark from time to time, but didn't we all?"

How had he heard about Hitler's decision? There were many possibilities. At the first and second Final Solution conferences (January and March 1942) representatives not only of the SS but also of the Four Year Plan Office, some of them quite lowly, had participated. Perhaps one of them was a friend or an acquaintance. Equally, it could have been someone high up in the railway office; by July 1942 many had been told, because major preparations were involved in the organizing of the Final Solution. The information could have come from a colleague charged with the man-

agement of industry in the occupied territories in the East. Perhaps the industrialist had himself recently visited Poland or perhaps a relative or friend serving in the army had told him what he had seen in the East, as many did at the time. Or perhaps the information came from inside the Berlin bureaucracy.

IN MY search I had found at least a half-dozen Germans who had come to Switzerland in the summer of 1942 and talked to friends and acquaintances about the fate of the Jews. Of the total, Sommer got his information from the *Abwehr*, Lemmer from the ministry of propaganda and also through other channels. But they had not been the ones who passed the news on to Sagalowitz and Riegner. Nor had the information come from the Schoellers, a clan of industrialists whose name had come up frequently in my investigations.

The case of the Schoellers is intriguing. Their ancestor had been a pioneer of the industrial revolution in the Rhineland; by the 1920's, the family interests had spread to East Germany and comprised paper and carpets as well as sugar. Ewald Schoeller, among other things, was made honorary chief administrator of Meyer Kaufman, once the largest Jewish textile factory, which had been "Aryanized." Ewald frequently came to Switzerland to meet with the Swiss branch of the family. Leo Schoeller, who ran the carpet factory in the Rhineland, had been born in Zurich and for a while even acted as Swiss Consul General. Though they did not contact Sagalowitz, I have been assured on excellent authority that one of them did pass on important information to Jewish friends in Zurich throughout the war and was in touch with Dr. Meyer—"Qn."

Such contacts were by no means uncommon. This led me to another family of German nationality, the von Selves. Walther von Selve also came from a family of industrialists of long standing; their metal works in Altena in Westphalia were among the leading in the field. Walther, born in 1876, was a racer of cars, motorcycles, and speedboats well before the turn of the century, and for two years traveled around the world. In 1911, he became general manager of the family business, which by then included also the Swiss metal works in Thun, not far from Berne. The year before, in 1910, he had married Else Wieland, the daughter of Philip Wieland and Lydia Sulzer. These facts are of some importance: both Wieland and Sulzer are names well-known in the German (and Swiss) metal industry.

Lydia von Selve's father, Philip Wieland, an Ulm industrialist, was active in politics. Following the liberal tradition of Southwest Germany he joined the German Liberal (later Democratic, still later State) party and represented it in the Reichstag from 1919 to 1930. This was a Left-of-Center party; its enemies called it the "Jew party." Philip

Wieland, who died in Thun in 1948, and many Jewish friends and acquaintances. Lydia von Selve, his daughter, also had pronounced democratic sympathies, and it is possible that it was with one of the members of this family that the message which reached Sagalowicz originated. They commuted between Altena and Thun, and since their factory produced ammunition during the war they had connections with military and political circles.* Old Philip Wieland was a member of the board of the central German bank, and his son-in-law Walther was on the board of several concerns specializing in the production of arms and explosives. Again I have it on good authority that they did not make a secret of what they saw and heard in Germany.

But there were other leads yet. In the course of my search an "Ascona connection" obtruded time and again. Ascona, the beautiful resort next to Lugano, was in those days smaller and less famous than now, but some very prominent German industrialists had taken residence there well before the war. One was Carl Ferdinand von Stumm, who belonged to a dynasty which was among the most influential in German heavy industry. Von Stumm senior had been a right-wing conservative; his son Carl Ferdinand, who had studied in Oxford and Geneva, and served as a diplomat in various capitals, was of more liberal persuasion.

Even more intriguing is the case of Edmund Stinnes, another Ascona resident. His father had been Germany's wealthiest and most important industrialist up to the time of his death in 1924. After that the Stinnes empire, divided among the sons, declined in importance. Edmund, the eldest son and the intellectual in the family, devoted relatively little time to his industrial interests but he still continued to be a director of the Vienna Montan Union and other enterprises. Here too the family connections are of interest. Edmund

Stinnes was married to Margiana von Schulze-Gaevernitz, the daughter of one of the leading professors of political economy of the day. Her brother Gero went to America and became head of the Atlantic and Pacific Investment Trust in New York; during the war Gero lived in Ascona and when he was not there he acted as Allen Dulles's right-hand man in Berne. Edmund Stinnes himself was probably not my man—from 1942 to the end of the war he was teaching at Haverford College in Pennsylvania—but a business friend of one of the members of the Ascona-Lugano German colony may have been.

Finally, one connection which bears further exploration concerns a family which represented the leading international fat and oil trust in Germany. This family had factories all over Germany, Austria, the "Protectorate," Switzerland, and Eastern Europe, and some of its members, too, were inveterate travelers.

Much evidence points in the direction of one or another of these people. But it cannot be proved beyond a doubt for, to the best of my knowledge, all the potential informants are now dead, and none confided in me.

Even though my search proved finally inconclusive, had I not undertaken it I would have missed much that was of importance in the transmission of the news about the Final Solution. My search showed above all that knowledge of Hitler's "secret" decision was more widespread than I had thought. If Sagalowicz heard the terrible news from one source, others had it from different contacts. Like Abraham, I went out "not knowing whither I went," and by a circuitous route I arrived in uncharted territory, full of surprises.

* There was also an interesting political connection with Siemens, the great German electricity corporation, which remains to be explored. Siemens had factories in Switzerland; they employed 2,000 involuntary Jewish workers in 1942.

Judy Blume's Children

Naomi Decter

JUDY BLUME is one of the most popular children's writers of the age. Since 1970 she has written eleven books: several are tales for small children, and one is an adult novel; the rest are extremely successful novels for little girls between nine and fourteen.

There is, indeed, scarcely a literate girl of novel-reading age who has not read one or more of the Blume books. Young fans pass them around and compare notes; they mob the author at personal appearances; they write her hundreds of letters every week, seeking advice, information, or comfort; and of course, they buy her books—more than ten million in the past ten years.

Miss Blume's works offer a child's-eye view of the trials and tribulations of life, and cover just about every social and emotional problem her readers are likely to encounter. *It's Not the End of the World*, for example, concerns a girl whose parents are getting divorced. The heroine of *Deenie* is a thirteen-year-old with curvature of the spine. *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* is about sibling rivalry. *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* is the story of a girl with a Jewish father and a Christian mother, trying to choose her own religion.

Miss Blume also writes about death, timidity, mob cruelty, and racial prejudice. But most of her books are in one way or another about sex. Her characters discuss

their own sex lives or their parents'; they masturbate and menstruate; they worry about the size of their breasts and about kissing; they have wet dreams and they even have intercourse.

Given the sophistication of Miss Blume's material, her style is surprisingly simple. She writes for the most part in the first person: her vocabulary, grammar, and syntax are colloquial; her tone, consciously or perhaps not, evokes the awkwardness of a fifth-grader's diary. "My teacher," begins the narrator of *Blubber*,

is Mrs. Minish. I'm not crazy about her. She hardly ever opens the windows in our room because she's afraid of getting a stiff neck. I never heard anything so dumb.

The following exchange in *Deenie* is also representative:

"Me and Janet went to Woolworth's. She tried on orange lipstick and brown eyeshadow."

"Did she get caught?"

"Of course not."

When we go to Woolworth's Janet's the best at trying on junk without buying.

If the prose often seems at odds with the subject, however, it is perfectly suited to Miss Blume's imagination and characterization. Plot in the Blume books follows a rather strict pattern. There is, first of all, a "problem"—social or emotional; then, a hero or heroine to define, and other children to participate in, the problem; parents to pay the bills, drive the cars, and occasionally give a word of advice; the odd troublesome sibling or doting grandparent. The problem is re-

solved through the child's own experience, and the book ends.

Miss Blume's stock melodramas are staffed by stock characters—the Right People (from the author's point of view) and the Wrong People. The Right People do and think the Right Thing, the Wrong People the Wrong Thing. One Right Person is virtually indistinguishable from another, and Wrong Persons bear a striking resemblance to other Wrong Persons.

Children, for example, who are interesting—i.e., eat only peanut butter, quote the *Guinness Book of World Records*, or know how to do fancy embroidery—tend to learn the right lessons, while uninteresting children seem to be bullies, thieves, or liars. Mothers who work are wise, helpful, and even fun, while mothers who stay at home and spend their time cleaning the house tend to nag and whine. Grandmothers who dress well and, perhaps, belong to Planned Parenthood are lively and warm, while Grandmas with ugly black old ladies' shoes are cold and forbidding—and seek in vain for childish affection. Parents who respect their children's judgment—and their privacy—are rewarded with filial love and respect, while parents who insist on dictating "life-styles" court disaster—even suicidal children. Teachers who encourage the creative impulses of their students preside over a happy and stimulating learning environment, while teachers who concentrate on the dull facts elicit boredom and fidgeting.

Mrs. Minish, the teacher in *Blubber*, is a case in point; this tale of child's inhumanity to child is, in fact, quintessential Blume. Mrs. Minish's class is so boring, even she can't stay awake in it. Her pupil, Jill, the book's heroine, is an interesting child—not simply because she eats only peanut butter but also because her best friend, Tracy Wu, is a Chinese American. Jill does a great deal more than yawn in Mrs.

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Minish's class; she joins with her fellow fifth-graders in tormenting the class fatty. The members of Mrs. Minish's class are as cruel as only children can be. They call the fat girl "Blubber" and send her nasty notes; they trip her in the school bus; they force her to eat something they claim is a chocolate-covered ant.

Jill's friend Tracy Wu, who is in a different fifth-grade class where they play interesting learning games, disapproves of the "Blubber"-baiting and allows as how Jill is most likely afraid of the class bully, Wendy. When Wendy calls Tracy a Chink, Jill has had enough. She rebels, only to find *herself* the target of group torment. Jill's mother—when she gets home from the office—offers counsel and wisdom: "It's rough to be on the other side, isn't it?" But it is Jill herself who solves the problem in the end; she exposes Wendy as a fickle bully, then decides to avoid group activity in future and makes friends with the shy girl in the class.

DEENIE'S problem (in *Deenie*) does not lend itself to easy solution. She is a thirteen-year-old who discovers she has curvature of the spine and must wear an ugly back brace for four years. Deenie is upset—her cheerleading ambitions are dashed, her vanity is wounded—but her mother is devastated. A housewife who cannot drive a car (in suburban New Jersey, this is the acme of helplessness), Deenie's mother spends her time planning her daughters' future: Helen, "the brains," will have a successful academic career; Deenie, "the beauty," will be a model. She drags Deenie to all the modeling agencies and becomes very put out when they complain about the child's posture. When the complaint is diagnosed as scoliosis, Ma goes to pieces and all but fades from the book.

Deenie's father is another story. He has always believed Deenie can be whatever she likes when she grows up and is only concerned for her health. He forces her to go to school when she wants to hide her brace from her friends. Once, away from home, Deenie contemplates removing the brace, but then she

has only to think of her father's trust in her to abandon the idea. Deenie learns that wearing a back brace means less to her than losing her father's respect. She also learns that her boyfriend is willing to kiss her despite the brace. And—most important—she discovers that she might like to become an orthopedic surgeon rather than a model.

Katherine Danziger, heroine of *Forever*, also learns several lessons. Katherine is seventeen and a senior in high school. Her mother works at the library. Her younger sister is a gifted artist, musician, and cook. The Danzigers have simple beige furniture and do not spend their evenings in front of the television. Katherine's grandmother, a lawyer, sends her granddaughter brochures on contraception. Katherine's chief interests are tennis, sex, and people's looks. At a New Year's party, she meets Michael Wagner. His chief interests are skiing, sex, and people's looks. Michael's parents have rather heavy dark furniture, and his mother refers to Katherine as "Michael's little friend." Katherine and Michael fall in love and vow to be true "forever." They do some heavy (and rather graphic) petting, and eventually they have sexual intercourse. During the summer they are separated; Katherine meets another boy and begins to have doubts about forever. Michael finds out and dumps her. Sadder but wiser, Katherine settles down to prepare for her first year in college. She has learned that first love need not be eternal; she has learned much about the male anatomy and about sexuality; and she has learned that sex need not mean either marriage or unwed motherhood.

THESE books are a perfect, if pint-sized, literary embodiment of contemporary enlightenment. They preach all the modern pieties and strike all the fashionable poses. They do so, moreover, with the rigidity of vision—and the social snobbery—that is the hallmark of their creed. There is in them no room for complexity of character, for conflicting emotions, or even for moral regeneration. Miss Blume's heroes never have an unacceptable thought; her villains, hav-

ing once deviated from orthodoxy, are condemned absolutely to their villainy. And underlying everything is the sense that—whatever the issue—villainy is just the tiniest bit tacky.

All this, and sex to boot: Miss Blume has obviously found a winning combination. Her books not only cater to and reinforce the prejudices of her audience, they also answer a need peculiar to that community. For, quite apart from arousing and satisfying her young readers' prurient interest, the Blume books offer an ideal solution to the liberated parent who wonders how best to fulfill the uncomfortable duty of teaching his child sexual freedom. Judy Blume can safely be trusted to explain that *everyone* masturbates, and that it's the healthiest thing in the world—fun, too; that restrictions on youthful sexuality (especially female) are unhealthy relics of a repressed past; and that sexual intercourse is simply pleasurable and without consequence—as long as one is on the Pill.

The Blume ethic does not stop at erotic casualness. Miss Blume is as much a creature of her times and class spiritually as she is sexually. The consistent and overriding message of her books—for which, predictably enough, she has received the greatest acclaim—is that the proper focus of one's curiosity and concern is oneself. Everywhere Miss Blume garners high praise for her "respectful," "realistic," and "accurate" depiction of children's preoccupation with themselves.

Realistic, respectful, and accurate she is—with a vengeance. So respectful is she that not a childish thought or feeling is too pedestrian to merit her attention; so realistic that not a detail of a child's life—from breakfast menu to sleepwear fashions—is too tedious to go unrecorded; so accurate that an afternoon with Katherine, Deenie, or Jill must seem to her readers like a few hours alone in front of the bathroom mirror.

That a few more hours in front of the mirror is the last thing a young girl needs is a thought that does not seem to have occurred to Miss Blume or her army of fans. Yet the happiest magic of chil-

dren's literature has always resided in its ability to burst the narcissistic bubble. One can, and does, learn any number of things from the March family, from Tom Sawyer, and even from Nancy Drew—for all their retrograde sociology. One learns to recognize and respect

courage and honor; one learns the value of humor; at the very least, one learns to appreciate and emulate the spirit of adventure. Above all, one learns that life is full of things one has never seen; one learns the habit and the rewards of lifting one's eyes from one's own

navel to look out upon the world.

Miss. Blume finds the navel a much more worthy object of contemplation than the world—which is clearly why, in a narcissistic age, her limiting and narrowing vision should be heralded for its honesty and praised for its realism.

Movies

The 60's in Soft Focus

Richard Grenier

NOT so long ago, the counterculture was being celebrated as heralding the birth of a new and better world. But judging by some new American films, in Hollywood, as elsewhere, a radical revision is under way. *The Rose*, drawn from the life of Janis Joplin, the rock star, and *Heart Beat*, the "true story" of Jack Kerouac and Carolyn and Neal Cassady, the founding parents of the Beat Generation, suggest that the counterculture may be destined for a far humbler position in popular history, and that the 60's (almost ignominiously for those who attributed to them such messianic significance) may be taking their place alongside the Gay 90's ("You'll look sweet, upon the seat, of a bicycle built for two") and the 20's ("Chicago, Chicago, that toddling town") as historical periods best remembered by the general public for their entertainments, as times when "people had fun." Janis Joplin, in short, has gone to meet the shades of

Scott and Zelda and Bix Beiderbecke, while Woodstock—far from being the birthing of a new nation—is now remembered by John Entwistle of The Who, which played such a prominent part at the festival, as just "a big gig."

On the face of it, the historical Janis Joplin would not seem to be an irresistibly engaging character. Coarse, loud, aggressive, foul-mouthed, abusive, quarrelsome, egomaniacal, she was addicted sequentially to a series of drugs, the last of which, heroin, did her in, and she was alcoholic all the way. Her notion of keeping her alcohol consumption "under control" was to start drinking early enough in the day so as to pass out during the afternoon, come to, and get an hour's worth of invigorating whiskey into her before her evening performance. She boasted stridently and in prolific detail about her gargantuan sex life, claiming she had "gotten it on with a couple of thousand cats . . . and a few hundred chicks," although one friend guessed her sexual score to be more like a third of what she claimed—in itself a revealing detail.

Dressed always in stage attire, in feathers and satins and bracelets and bells, she was so drunken and unruly that often she could not get served in department stores or fashionable restaurants unless she was accompanied by a more sedate friend. A helicopter pilot, taking a look at her and saying it was against an FAA ruling to transport persons in her condition, once refused to fly her to a stadium where thousands of fans were waiting for her to give a concert. She admired the Hell's Angels, dedicated one of her albums to them, and gave a special concert for them in San Francisco—which didn't stop her, while weaving her way to the stage to perform, from getting into a down-to-the floor slugging match with the girlfriend of one of the group's members over a bottle of Southern Comfort.

In October 1970, Janis Joplin died of a heroin overdose in the Landmark Hotel in Los Angeles. The whole epic, from her explosion into major stardom at the Monterey Festival in the summer of 1967, had run its course in only three years. But her potential as a

RICHARD GRENIER, who writes frequently on the movies, has just completed a novel.

death-cult figure became clear immediately, when her last album, released posthumously, sold better than any of the records she put on the market during her lifetime.

The authors of *The Rose* are at pains to state that their film is not the life story of Janis Joplin, but is a "synthesis" of the stories of "a number" of rock singers of the period. No doubt they have their reasons for this disavowal (libel, copyright, greater freedom with story line), but it is disingenuous. The movie is not only inspired by the life of Janis Joplin, it is unquestionably intended to be taken as her story by the public. Transmuted, shifted, most often drastically toned down, all the notorious themes of her life are there: heroin, alcohol, sexual promiscuity, lesbianism, scurrilous language, gaudy attire, even the disastrous results of her occasionally attempting to mix in with the general population.

I must make clear at the outset that, in *The Rose*, we are dealing with a very handsomely made film. It is by far the best work of Mark Rydell, the director, and he is helped by stunning photography by Vilmos Zsigmond (who did *The Deer Hunter*) and a startling phalanx of extra hands for the big spectacle scenes of some of the greatest names in American cinematography, including Haskell Wexler, Laszlo Kovacs, and Owen Roizman. But all would have been for naught, of course, if not for the remarkable presence of Bette Midler, who, in her first movie, reveals herself as an actress of formidable power and range, not to mention—less surprising—an accomplished popular singer. Other performers are of a comparable calibre: particularly Alan Bates as Rudge, Rose's Svengali-like pop-cockney manager (a character quite unlike Janis Joplin's manager, the stern Albert Grossman), and Harry Dean Stanton, an actor of truly peculiar authority, as a puritanical country singer. But with all the sumptuous camera work, the very high level of performance of the cast, and even the impressive authenticity of detail in portraying the rock world, what has *The Rose* given us?

The opening scene of the film is a

quarrel between Rose and her manager. High-strung, intemperate, she rages against the conditions of her life. "I got no fuckin' life, Rudge! I can't get laid! Nobody wants me! That ain't all. I got to sound good! And I don't! I don't! I can't dredge up the sincerity any more!" She pleads for a year's respite from the soul-destroying grind. Rudge bullies her vociferously. "Three million dollars worth of dates we're talking about canceling here! This is a fuckin' business! Just like Chevrolet and Sara Lee! So don't give me any 'tired artiste' bullshit!" There is an interesting ambiguity in their relationship throughout the scene, and throughout the picture. Is Rudge a satanic character, the cause—or one of the causes—of Rose's suffering? Or does Rose have a masochistic strain, wanting in fact to be bullied, needing to have someone to bully her, incapable herself of fulfilling the most routine professional obligations without Rudge? Rudge is not, however, or is no longer, one of Rose's lovers.

Following the first concert we see, where Rose exuberantly greets the audience, "Hiya, motherfuckers!" and sings up a storm to thunderous ovations, she is taken to meet the country singer (Stanton) who insults and humiliates her, and, as if to console herself, she picks up a man, an army deserter. He becomes the boyfriend in residence, traveling with the company, but Rose has dalliances with other men as well.

This is all very "tastefully" suggested. Nothing is crudely put. When a beautiful lesbian from her past approaches her plaintively, Rose is kindly but indifferent, as if to indicate that at some mad moment, who knows what this excitable woman might have gotten herself into out of sheer impetuosity, but surely she isn't a real lesbian. We are shown a whole series of scenes in which Rose, spunky, voice perhaps a trifle too high, is ill-treated by the outside world. "We don't serve hippies here!" When she returns to her home town in the poor rural area of northern Florida (Janis Joplin was actually a middle-class renegade from Port Arthur, Texas, her father an oil-in-

dustry engineer and graduate of Texas A and M), she is roundly insulted by the locals. We are given, in short, an extremely subdued and prettified version of the real Janis Joplin.

The character played by Bette Midler in the movie is highly colored, no doubt, but sensitive, vulnerable, surely more sinned against than sinning. She is abused by her manager, abused by a country-singer colleague, abused by envious home-town locals, abused by callous, compassionless "straights" everywhere when all she wants to be is a free spirit, all she lives for is her art.

Five years ago, *The Rose's* co-producer, Marvin Worth, produced *Lenny*, in which Dustin Hoffman played the late comic, Lenny Bruce, who also died of a heroin overdose. Throughout this strangely humorless film (very odd in that Bruce was nothing if not funny), the comedian was portrayed with remarkable insistence as a saint and a martyr. Bruce was right; society was wrong; and society killed him for telling the truth. Now Lenny Bruce was not Janis Joplin. The 50's and early 60's were a far rougher time to be an iconoclast than the heady late 60's (when it was usually rather safer to smash an icon than to revere it). But the tone of the saintly Hoffman-Bruce was nothing like the breezy, sardonic Lenny Bruce I remembered, and who can still be heard on records. All was surrendered by Bob Fosse, the director, to the objective of showing Bruce as a revolutionary social critic who paid the grisly price for his heresies.

Since *Lenny* and *The Rose* had the same producer, and the producer in this country is the director's boss, I looked very hard for the same "saint-and-martyr" treatment in the Janis Joplin story. But in the five years since *Lenny* appeared, things have changed.

In 1979, for example, United Artists released the movie version of the musical *Hair*, and although it was only a decade since the stage version had been a worldwide sensation, I have rarely seen a film so antique. Deliriously joyful throngs of hirsute youths flying banners

emblazoned with symbols of peace and making "V" for Victory signs with their fingers in response to the American defeat in Vietnam seemed hardly an appropriate comment on boat people and starving Cambodians fleeing their new Communist rulers. Evidently I was not the only one who found the "Let the Sunshine In" ethos of *Hair* grossly out of touch with the realities of the late 70's. Despite the fact that many audiences can enjoy any drivel set to music and sung and danced by pretty people, the film did not even make the list of 1979's fifty most successful films, finishing even lower than such failures as *Oliver's Story* and John Travolta's embarrassing *Moment by Moment*.

The makers of *The Rose* seemed to have judged the changing temper of the times more shrewdly. They evidently sensed that revolutionary martyrs (no less than the hippies in *Hair*) have gone out of style since *Lenny* and that it is time again for Isadora Duncan and Judy Garland and the credo of Edna St. Vincent Millay, who "burned her candle at both ends" ("...It will not last the night, But, ah, my foes, and oh, my friends—It gives a lovely light"), for ladies consumed by the very intensity of their fervor. Romantic heroines, if you wish, but certainly not to be emulated, in fact cautionary tales (Duncan and Garland) of what happens to those who seek to fly too high. The fashionable myth is no longer Prometheus but Icarus.

I accept as an apt expression of *The Rose's* essence the words of Jack Kroll of *Newsweek*: "A fevered, fearless portrait of a tormented, gifted, sexy child-woman who sang her heart out until it exploded." In other words, what causes Rose's destruction is not the evils of a society bent on destroying anyone who challenges it, but her devotion to her art, a determination to give herself, generously, for the benefit of others, lighting up the world with the glory of her music. And if the idea is mawkish, the film is mawkish too, especially when measured against the real Janis Joplin, who was a psychopath marked for self-annihilation before she ever took up singing. The sui-

cidal drive was hardly concealed. When she was on "speed," she went from fat to a frightening eighty-eight pounds. When on "downers," she ran around smashing her head into walls and trying to get run over by automobiles. When she took heroin, she was told by a competent medical authority that if she continued she would die. She continued. She died.

LIKE *The Rose*, the new movie about Jack Kerouac and Neal and Carolyn Cassady, *Heart Beat*, seeks to recycle the rebels of the recent past by presenting them in a less political and more "aesthetic" light. On the evidence of the movie, I would say that John Byrum, its director and scenario writer, and perhaps also Nick Nolte, its principal star (last seen as the raffish, alienated wide-receiver hero of the highly successful *North Dallas Forty*), still feel a bond of allegiance with these proto-beatniks of the post-World War II years. But there is a dying fall. The movie does not invite us to emulate the stark refusal of its heroes to compromise in any way with the canons of conventional morality. They are valiant, yes. Exhilarating to contemplate, surely. But what the movie seems to tell us is that those who aspire to such great purity are destroyed—not so much by society as by the very nature of the world.

Jack Kerouac underwent more than one radical shift in reputation in his own lifetime. In the late 40's, Kerouac (played in the film by John Heard), an aspiring novelist from Lowell, Massachusetts, set out across the country in the wake of Cassady (Nolte), a young delinquent for whom he had conceived the most intense admiration. "The only truly fearless man I ever met," he called him. Cassady, in fact, seems to have been little more than a feckless rowdy and petty thief, his conduct unmarred by the slightest idealism or even loyalty to his friends. He did not, in short, suspend a conventional moral sense in the interest of some cause, but only to feed his appetites. Kerouac, naturally, thought even this was wonderful. (It was not the first time, of course, that a thief-hero made the

reputation of a writer. In another time and another place, in pre-revolutionary Russia, *Chelkash*, the literary portrait of a very bold thief indeed, and one who also scorned the material goods he stole, made an overnight celebrity of the young Maxim Gorky.)

In any case, Kerouac wrote the story of their adventures in novel form in *On the Road*—which remained unpublished for six years while its author lived in poverty. When the book finally saw the light, due largely to the efforts of the poet Allen Ginsberg, it was just in time to make Kerouac and the Cassadys heroes of the Beat Generation of the 50's, and Kerouac enjoyed an intense, if brief, celebrity.

Unfortunately for the purposes of myth, Kerouac and Cassady and Carolyn Cassady did not die at twenty-seven like Janis Joplin but all lived on into early middle age, Kerouac falling out of fashion again, and Carolyn, her face marked by crow's feet now, surviving the two men with whom she lived in a *ménage à trois* to write the memoirs on which the film is based. (The film, by the way, grossly falsifies the sexual side of the story by reducing Kerouac's and Cassady's homosexuality to the merest hint.)

Improvident sybarites do not age well, but it is not merely that John Byrum got himself trapped with a triad of youth heroes who didn't have the good taste to obliterate themselves before their first wrinkles appeared. After all, he could have ended *Heart Beat* on a note of triumph. But Byrum seemed to want to tell the whole story, positively dwelling on the characters' decline: Kerouac neglected again and sick; Carolyn (played by Cissy Spacek) aged and lonely, making her claim to significance with sweet sadness, "We did it first." Hardly a call to the barricades.

INTERESTINGLY, the best and most truthful representation in the cinema of the social turbulence of the 60's in Western society is Britain's *Quadrophenia*, the story of the ugly clashes between "Mods" and "Rockers" that broke out in Britain in 1964, culminating in an epic riot on the beachfront of the his-

toric Channel resort of Brighton. Produced by one of Britain's leading rock groups, The Who, the movie takes its title from one of their hit albums, which also provides the film's driving musical accompaniment. (The "quad" refers to the group's four members: Roger Daltrey—who played the lead in Ken Russell's pyrotechnic film version of *Tommy* as well as his *Lisztomania*—John Entwistle, Peter Townshend, and the late Keith Moon, still another victim of a drug overdose.) But *Quadrophenia*, in which the members of the group do not appear themselves, could hardly be farther from an attempt to glorify or romanticize the period: it is a profoundly serious effort to understand it.

It has never been properly appreciated in the United States that the rock cultures of America and Britain—despite the to-ing and fro-ing of individual artists and groups—represented quite distinct sociological phenomena. The rock revolution in America was overwhelmingly an expression of the affluent middle class. Bob Dylan's father was a pharmacist, Janis Joplin's a petroleum engineer, James Taylor's a professor of medicine and member of the social register, Carly Simon's a famous publisher, Joan Baez's an official at UNESCO (the list could be extended indefinitely). Their ballads of alienation and romantic vagrancy were listened to by college students unhappy at having to study for their midyear exams. In Britain, by contrast, both performers and audience were overwhelmingly and quintessentially working class. When I once asked Ringo Starr of the Beatles how he felt about the endless round of concerts and motels, considered such "hell" by the American rock musicians, he answered, amused, that it was "better than workin'," by which he meant operating a power lathe or cutting sheet metal.

When the rock craze hit Britain, it fell on working-class youths who had never before had money for anything but the most meager necessities but now, thanks to rising standards of living, could buy motorcycles, fancy gear, records, intoxicating mobility. As one can imag-

ine, these young people did not go about maligning materialism and the affluent society, but proceeded instead to use these flashy new consumer goods to express the all-too-genuine antagonisms and tribal hatreds of working-class life. "Rockers" wore leather jackets and rode motorcycles; "Mods" wore spiffy narrow-lapeled suits and parkas and rode motor-scooters. The differences were merely of style, like nothing so much as the rival Greens and Blues of the Byzantine empire, but Mods and Rockers met to do battle at Margate, and again at Brighton, and they smashed and trashed and blood ran into the sands all the same.

Quadrophenia is a grim, grittily realistic recounting of these events (as opposed to *Saturday Night Fever*, which, despite its brio, thoroughly romanticized and condoned what it ostensibly set out to condemn). Franc Roddam, *Quadrophenia*'s director and co-screenwriter, says cautiously, "If there's any morality in this film, it's that being in a group can be dangerous," citing the IRA, "football hooligans," and the destructive nature of mobs and gangs in general. Since the movie was made, Roddam and The Who were given even further reason to ponder the madness of crowds when eleven people were killed in the crush trying to get into a concert The Who were giving at the Riverfront Coliseum in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The audience for rock music has changed somewhat over the last decade, but those who still attribute the exaltation and energy of the audiences of the late 60's entirely to the love and idealism of the "Woodstock Nation" must wonder how in the space of only ten years the saints of Woodstock could have become the brutal mob of Cincinnati. (Of course, there was a killing at a Rolling Stones concert at the Altamont Speedway in California as early as 1969, the same year as Woodstock; and even at the end of the 60's, with the image of the beautiful, idealistic young still at its height among the nation's thinkers and seers, rock promoters—practical men—were already abandoning mass rock festi-

vals as inducing uncontrollable violence and vandalism.)

WHATEVER their faults, *The Rose* and *Heart Beat* (like *Quadrophenia*) are "quality" films made by people who aspire to artistic seriousness. An irony of the present situation in American motion pictures is that just as the authors of such films as these seem to be responding to a sharp shift in the national mood by clearly taking their distance from the counterculture, movies aimed at the mass audience—which in the glory days of the counterculture tended to be apolitical or often markedly conservative (*The Exorcist*, *Jaws*, *The Poseidon Adventure*, *Towering Inferno*, *Love Story*, *Airport*)—are just beginning to disgorge attitudes fashionable among the elite a decade ago. A whole spate of these films is now appearing. I offer only one example, *Meteor*, starring Sean Connery, who only yesterday was defending us all from the Red Peril as Ian Fleming's James Bond, the Rover Boy of the West, locked in mortal combat with our totalitarian enemies.

In *Meteor*, Connery plays some kind of ballistics genius who has designed a satellite-based missile system, pointing away from the earth, to protect our planet against the possible intrusion of a giant meteor. He has quit work in a rage, however, on learning that the dastardly Pentagon has turned his satellite-based missiles inward so as to be able to attack the Soviet Union. Lo, the feared meteor appears. But the plot is so constructed that, even with Connery back in harness, and our missiles turned outward again, we need Soviet cooperation to destroy the oncoming meteor. The Russians oblige with the lovable Dubov (Brian Keith) and his fetching assistant Tatiana (Natalie Wood). An American air force general commanding the missile-control center is incensed at their arrival and adamantly refuses to let them help us in our attempts to escape annihilation (the meteor is headed for the United States, of course). Connery gets the better of him, however, and Russians and Americans together, hand in hand, save America.

Now a movie like *Meteor* does not attract a very discriminating audience. But it is nonetheless rather remarkable that a mass-market American film, in the most routine way possible, should serve up for a vast, popular, presumably at least minimally patriotic audience a story whose didactic precepts are the following: (1) that the main threat of nuclear war is from the U.S. military; and (2) that Russian officialdom is benign, cooperative in all things, and wholeheartedly devoted to the well-being of the United States and its citizens.

It may seem odd that such blatantly pro-Soviet agitprop material should turn up in a movie aimed at the mass American market, especially since there is an impression

that American radicals of recent decades have at least made a "clean break" with Moscow. Yet in my own dealings with radicals in the artistic and intellectual worlds, I have often found condemnation of the Soviet Union to be perfunctory at best. Among those with an "artistic temperament," particularly, I have encountered a widespread tendency to place on the same footing, as injustices of an identical level of iniquity, the Hollywood blacklisting of a handful of wealthy screenwriters in the McCarthy period and the death of millions and millions of Soviet citizens in Stalin's Gulag.

Interestingly, the recent mass-market movies taking their intellectual lead from yesterday's radical

attitudes are meeting a decidedly mixed commercial reception. *Meteor*, for example, has gone over quite dismally. (*The Rose*, with no big stars and production costs a fraction of those of the Sean Connery film, has done much better at the box office.) Yet as I write, more anti-patriotic films are in the Hollywood pipeline.

Mencken's famous aphorism notwithstanding, large numbers of men *have* gone broke underestimating the intelligence of the American movie public. Whole companies have been wiped out or forced into other lines of business. We may now, an interesting novelty, see other men go broke underestimating the American public's elemental nationalism. We shall see.

Theater

Three from London

Jack Richardson

B*etrayal*, Harold Pinter's new play, is quite different from the main body of his work. It is not filled with the crossed monologues, portentous pauses, and insinuations of dark meanings that have come to form the Pinteresque style. Rather, this latest work is much more open and traditional in its manner. It is a romantic comedy, triangle variation, and its style keeps very much to the surface of things. Its characters are meant to

be pleasant, civilized types who encounter life in an abstracted off-hand way, and who keep their passions balanced by a sense of responsibility and a desire to avoid unnecessary fuss. I felt at times, while sitting through *Betrayal*, that I might be watching an imitation of Noel Coward or a somewhat thinned-out version of Terence Rattigan. By the play's end, however, I felt only that I had watched Pinter trying to be both clever and commonplace, and that I still could not count myself among his admirers.

The plot of *Betrayal* is so familiar that it does take a cer-

tain amount of courage to try to drag it through the duration of two full acts. Things begin in 1968 in the bedroom of a married couple named Robert and Emma. Robert's best friend, a decent chap named Jerry—he is a literary agent, Robert is a publisher—tells Emma that he has fallen in love with her. She is startled and rather swept away by his announcement. Soon she and Jerry, who is also married, have set up a little love flat together, in which they enjoy a *cinq à sept* once or twice a week, meetings which are mainly devoted to painful discussions of the problems involved in maintaining a love affair

JACK RICHARDSON is a playwright and critic and the author of the recently published *Memoir of a Gambler* (Simon & Schuster).

between two married people. Finding the times and the means of deception is always difficult, but they manage for five years to keep their spouses innocent of their infidelity. When Emma's husband does find out—an ill-timed letter from Jerry coupled with a matter-of-fact confession from Emma—either out of friendship or indifference he says nothing but allows the affair to continue without incident for another two years until, of its own accord, it peters out.

Two years after their romance has ended—it is now 1977—Jerry and Emma meet in a pub and begin recalling old times. After a few drinks and memories, Emma informs Jerry that she and Robert are separating and that he knows about their affair. Jerry, believing that this knowledge has only just been acquired, summons his friend to his house to ask his forgiveness, his understanding, and, in passing, his promise not to tell his—Jerry's—wife about the seven-year deception she suffered.

Robert, who throughout the play has maintained a decently detached bafflement about everything, an attitude, we discover, which masks a good number of infidelities of his own, doesn't quite understand what his friend is so upset about. After all, he now tells Jerry, Emma had confessed to the affair four years ago. Jerry is shocked and hurt. He feels that, by keeping her confession a secret, Robert has betrayed him more than he has betrayed Robert. Nonsense, old fellow, Robert tells him, it all doesn't matter any more, water under the bridge you know, we're still best friends, and what say we have lunch soon? Thus, with all its variations worked out, the play ends.

That is really all there is to the story of *Betrayal*. Pinter, however, has tried to give a twist to this tired little saga by constructing his play backward, so that we begin with the last scenes of discovery and confession and move along until the play ends with the encounter of that fateful passion in Emma's bedroom nine years earlier. A lot has been made by reviewers of this chronological inversion, but it is really no more than an empty exer-

cise, a gimmick meant to make the stale seem fresh. The trick is not even consistently maintained, since the action flashes forward whenever information or dramatic movement requires a normal sequence of events.

But even if the device had been consistent, there would still be no thematic relevance or narrative purpose to the play's crablike journey. The fact that the ends of the actions are known is not used in any way to illuminate them, nor are insights into the character of human deception created out of Pinter's present-to-past perspective. Indeed, the device often merely produces a deadening sense of *déjà vu*, of scenes and information put forward redundantly. The only thing this fooling with time really gains for *Betrayal* is the sort of innovative sheen that impresses the theater intelligentsia. To those less susceptible of being dazzled, it merely proves that a dull tale told backward is still a dull tale.

The production, directed by Peter Hall, has a glazed-eyed look about it, as though everyone were slightly stunned by the play's words and actions. Roy Scheider, as the deceived husband, hides for most of the evening behind a bemused smile, while, as his friend and rival, Raul Julia wanders with a sort of stiff nonchalance through scenes that form unlikely backgrounds for his Latin accent and appearance. Blythe Danner plays both wife and mistress with an enigmatic blandness that suits the vague dimensions of her part. Like her fellow performers, she has her problems with an English accent. An occasional slurred vowel or clipped consonant is as much as this trio of Americans can muster in the way of vocal technique. I suppose Peter Hall prefers these unlikely sounds to permitting the play to be Americanized, for then problems of behavior as well as pronunciation would arise. Still, the alien noises uttered all evening by his actors keep the play fixed in a state of tentative, self-conscious theatricality.

Pinter has generally been so well served by his compatriots that many of his shortcomings as a writer have been hidden behind

the techniques of fine acting. In *Betrayal* he has only mere competence to help him, and the shallowness and dramatic coyness of the play are always visible.

TOM STOPPARD is also back on Broadway, and like Pinter he too has changed his theatrical manner. Whereas in the past, with plays like *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Jumpers*, and *Travesties*, Stoppard was content to fashion a world out of literary and intellectual conceits, he has now, in his new work *Night and Day*, condescended to try his hand at writing a rather sedate and conventional comedy. Yet even when he has left the antic landscapes of his imagination for a turn in the ordinary world, Stoppard remains a playwright of surprise and mental agility, an artist who uses the stage not so much to reflect life as to unravel its problems. In *Travesties*, behind all the parodies, literary allusions, and verbal play, Stoppard was involved in a serious look at the uses and abuses of art in an age of politics, war, and social restructuring. In *Night and Day* his theme is somewhat more modest: namely, the functions and responsibilities of journalism.

Having once worked as a reporter for a newspaper, Stoppard, one supposes, brings to this subject more than an abstract interest. He looks at his former profession with critical good humor, and though he finds much to deplore in the way it manages the world's information, he never (as, say, Shaw did to the medical profession) bullies it into absurdity. When all the faults of Fleet Street are admitted, Stoppard still thinks it better to have reporters snooping through the world, turning up reams of trivial and often unreadable copy, than to have any sort of responsible control exercised over them by state guardians, moral censors, or literary critics. If the conclusion is not a very controversial one, reaching it nevertheless provides Stoppard with a number of fine opportunities for sharp, dramatic arguments.

The play takes place in an imaginary country in Africa, a former British colony called Kam-

bawe. A revolution is beginning between leftist rebels and a government that is run by an autocratic president named Mageeba, a graduate of the London School of Economics and imitator of the policies of Idi Amin. Three journalists turn up on the plantation of Alastair and Ruth Carson in order to report on the spreading war.

The Carsons are a very civilized couple who have managed the transition from colonial overseers to precarious citizenship in Kambawe with their dignity intact. The journalists whom they are forced to take on as their guests are all in different ways dedicated to their assignment. There is Dick Wagner, a devout trade unionist, a grizzled veteran of foreign beats, and a man proud of the honest labor in his profession. Sent by fate to plague him is Jacob Milne, a fledgling newsman who is in Kambawe on a free-lance basis. Before the play begins, he has already stumbled onto a front-page story that has been run by Wagner's paper, a fact that naturally does not sit well with the older man of the press. The last member of the trio is a photographer, George Guthrie, a harried-looking fellow always in need of sleep who for the last two decades has been risking his life in order to dispatch to the world close-up pictures of a variety of wars.

Throughout the play, these three gentlemen discuss and debate the nature of their trade, touching on everything from the capitalist ownership of newspapers to French photojournalists who arrive to cover revolutions dressed in Yves Saint Laurent fatigues. Against these representatives of the press and their desire to make all things a matter of public record, Stoppard sets the philosophy and character of Ruth Carson. A fierce partisan of the private life, Ruth has learned something about newspapers from the way they treated her when she was involved in a steamy divorce action. Her opinion of journalists has not been raised since then. The fact that only a few days earlier she had spent an unlikely romantic night with Dick Wagner in a hotel room in London becomes doubly distressing to her when he turns up in her house and

she finds out what he does for a living. But as she listens to the enthusiastic and amusing testimonials to the achievements of the press proclaimed by young Milne, her attitude begins to soften, at least to the point of beginning to fantasize admitting another member of the Fourth Estate into her bed.

In the play's second act, both the press and private life encounter the caprice of absolute power. President Mageeba visits the Carson house for the purpose of holding a secret meeting with the leader of the rebels trying to overthrow him. Dick Wagner, having accidentally learned about this rendezvous, has naturally kept the information to himself, and while his colleagues are off following a barren lead, he finagles his way back into the house in search of an exclusive interview. He gets one, but it does not come easily. Mageeba, at first pleasant, grows more and more maniacal as he discusses the role of the press in his country. Should, he asks, the press be free to select which facts it prints and to decide how to shade and emphasize a story? Does not freedom, in a social context, imply responsibility? And how to define that responsibility?

All this is said in a reasonable, if menacing, voice by the black president of Kambawe. Suddenly, however, his manner changes. He becomes belligerent, sarcastic, and dangerously pleased with his own importance and sense of humor. He begins to strike Wagner about the head with a swagger stick as he brings his argument to a close. "And what is a responsible newspaper?" he asks, as his interviewer lies bleeding on the floor. He answers his own question by saying that it is one on which he has a relative as the chief editor.

While the president is blustering, Guthrie, the photographer, arrives with the news that Milne has been killed, shot by some nervous soldiers who mistook their jeep for one of the enemy's. Ruth is horrified, seeing in Milne's death only the waste of someone she had wanted to love. At the play's end, faced with the loneliness of her life and the boredom of her marriage, she watches Wagner send off a short

Telex about Milne and, somewhat chagrined by her poor moral character, entertains the idea of sleeping with him again.

It should be evident that *Night and Day* is a play of many parts. Besides the theme of the press and its duties, there are dramatic observations on war, Third World governments, and marital infidelity. Not all of these subjects mesh neatly, and often one is conscious of a shifting of gears as Stoppard moves from topic to topic. Still, everything is handled with wit and humor, and at the play's end, as improbable as some of its events have seemed, one is satisfied that in some loose way they are all held together by a very entertaining logic.

In the role of Ruth, Maggie Smith is called on to wrap herself up in a personal world that, until the death of young Milne, is impervious to the high and bloody deeds going on around it. From within the cocoon of feminine guile and sensuality, Miss Smith radiates a lively commentary on all the action surrounding her, making the selfish singlemindedness of her character seem at the same time penetrating and vacuous. There may be some who would find this portrait of a woman frivolous and belittling, and, indeed, in many ways Ruth Carson is a scatter-brained piece of fluff who seems to understand nothing beyond the boundaries of the bedroom. But as Miss Smith portrays her, one begins to suspect that within those boundaries there is more useful wisdom to be found than on the editorial pages of the world's newspapers or in all the histories of emerging nations.

IN 1934, when Ernst Roehm and a number of other SA leaders were executed by Hitler, a sort of protectorate over German homosexuals came to an end. Roehm, himself a pederast, had used his influence to see that, in Berlin at least, homosexual life went on despite existing laws and Hitler's deep distaste for this form of erotic behavior. With his death, another form of persecution was added to the many that had already been set loose upon the citizens of the Third Reich.

Martin Sherman's *Bent* begins on the day following the purge of the SA. Max and Rudy, two homosexuals who live together in a small Berlin flat, are slowly recovering from the effects of a party thrown the night before at the nightclub where Rudy works as a dancer. Suddenly, a third young man appears from the bedroom. Max has no idea who he is until Rudy explains that Max picked up the fellow—his name is Wolf—at the party and brought him home. While the three men are thus sorting themselves out, two SS men break into the room. Seeing Wolf, they recognize him as a member of the SA and as one of Roehm's lovers. They beat and eventually kill him, while Max and Rudy flee from the room.

After being on the run and hiding for a time, the two are finally caught and shipped off to Dachau. On the train, a trio of sadistic guards begin, for no reason, to beat

up Rudy, and then, to add spice to this amusement, force Max to join the assault. Knowing that he will die if he does not strike Rudy when commanded to, Max, in rage and despair, punishes harder and harder until he actually kills his friend and lover.

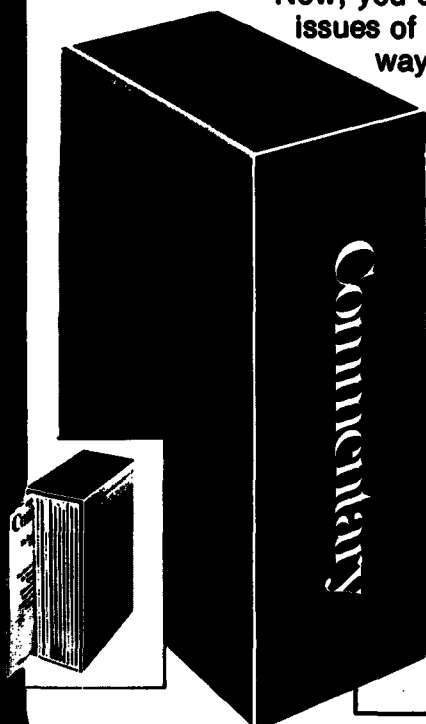
His next ordeal, which mercifully happens off stage, is to prove to his tormentors that he is not queer or "bent." This he is obliged to do by having sexual intercourse with the corpse of a young girl recently shot by one of the guards. As a reward for his successful performance, Max is allowed to trade the pink triangle on his prison uniform, which signifies a homosexual, for the yellow star of the Jew. This is something of a promotion, for the lowest rung in concentration-camp life is at this time, according to the play, reserved for prisoners who are homosexual.

The second act begins in Dachau itself. Max, filled with self-loathing

over what he has done, is intent only on survival. He even tries to convince himself that he is not a homosexual, that he has really been locked away because, as the emblem on his uniform proclaims, he is Jewish. But then he meets Horst, also a homosexual, and the two of them, while moving rocks back and forth across a small prison yard, begin, in defiance of all the laws of the world they now inhabit, to fall in love with each other. Constantly watched by guards, never allowed to stop this purposeless work except when standing at attention for an hourly head count, forbidden to talk to or even to look at each other, Max and Horst nevertheless manage to create for themselves a bond of affection and passion. In one scene, while standing at attention, their eyes fixed on empty space in front of them, the two men find a way verbally to make love to each other that brings them both to climax, a moment

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that marks a small triumph for human inventiveness and imagination.

Finally, of course, their illegal feelings are discovered and, while Max watches, Horst is shot. Max is then ordered to bury his lover's corpse, but before he does so, he exchanges Horst's coat for his own, so that he now defiantly wears the pink triangle of the homosexual. He also admits to himself that he has indeed loved Horst, and that this tender emotion is not, as he had always professed, alien to the homosexual way of life. Having thus reconciled himself to who he is and what he feels, Max throws himself on an electrically charged barbed-wire fence and dies.

Now there are many things wrong with *Bent* as a play. It is simplistic—the Nazis, for example, are all depicted as sadistic robots, a device that makes them seem of no greater human significance than

any other collection of melodrama villains. It is given to fits of sentimentality. And for all its bursts of sporadic violence, it never really conveys what sort of environment a totalitarian state can create.

Yet for most of the evening one remains sympathetic to *Bent*, for the play does, with some humor and a great deal of earnest conviction, come down on the side of life and human courage. One is uncomfortable with certain details of that idea of life and that idea of courage, because one remains aware of moral and historical considerations which *Bent* makes no pretense of facing, among which is the uninvestigated assertion that a Jewish star could ever have been a coveted possession in a concentration camp. But on the whole, for what it does attempt, the play succeeds both as a theatrical work and as a reminder of a time when humanity itself was bent out of shape.

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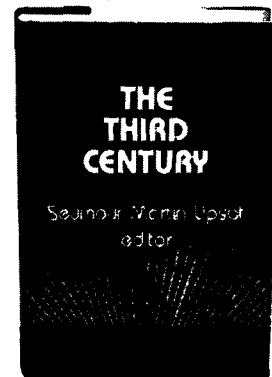
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Books in Review

The Clerks' Tale

THE BRETHREN: INSIDE THE SUPREME COURT. By BOB WOODWARD AND SCOTT ARMSTRONG. Simon & Schuster. 467 pp. \$13.95.

Reviewed by WALTER BERNIS

The *Brethren* is, as it claims to be, a term-by-term account of the "inner workings of the Supreme Court from 1969 to 1976—the first seven years of Warren E. Burger's tenure as Chief Justice of the United States." Focusing on the major cases decided in each of these terms—cases dealing with abortion, school busing, and Watergate, for example—the authors provide a detailed account not only of the "internal debates, the tentative positions taken by the Justices, the preliminary votes, the various drafts of written opinions, the negotiations, confrontations, and compromises," but of conversations alleged to have taken place among the Justices and between them and others. Thus, what had been hidden from public view—namely, the Court's "deliberative process"—is hidden no more.

Whether anyone will benefit from these revelations is of no concern to the authors of this book; they provide no chapter summarizing whatever conclusions they might have come to, and in their introductory chapter they say only that the "hidden motives of the decision makers"—on the Court as well as in the White House and Congress—"can be as important as the eventual decisions themselves." Hidden motives are there to be uncovered by investigative reporting,

and investigative reporters are not required to justify themselves.

What does require justification are the motives of those who talk to the reporters, because investigative reporting consists largely in persuading government officials to make public information intended to be private. It resembles that other Washington art, "leaking," except that it requires the reporter rather than the official to take the initiative. From the point of view of the reporter, however, this is a distinction without a difference; in each case he is dealing with persons eager or willing to give, at the office or outside it, and what they give can be turned to profitable use. For *All the President's Men* Woodward and Carl Bernstein had their "Deep Throat" in the executive branch, and Woodward and his new partner, Scott Armstrong, managed to find hundreds of equally eager informants in the judiciary. From them came the materials for this book. And like "Deep Throat," whose identity remains a secret to this day (one of the few in Washington), these "Big Mouths," mostly former Supreme Court clerks, remain anonymous. So far as we know, anonymity is the only payment they demanded, although Woodward and Armstrong, given a year's paid leave from the *Washington Post* and a \$350,000 advance by their publisher, were in a position to be more generous.

That they were not required to be more generous with them points to another difference between investigative reporting and leaking: the "leaker," often a competitor for office or preferment but sometimes a "whistle blower" or "trial-balloon floater," has a motive that can usually be identified (and is not always reprehensible). But why did "more than two hundred people, including several Justices, more than 170 former law clerks, and several dozen former employees of the Court," talk to Woodward and

Armstrong? And not only talk to them, but deliver to them "eight file drawers with thousands of pages of documents from the chambers of eleven of the twelve Justices who served during the period 1969-1976"? What did they gain by violating their trust, these clerks? Not fame, for, as I say, we do not know their names. The fleeting pleasure of being thought important by famous reporters? Perhaps. The satisfaction of damaging the reputation of the Chief Justice? Probably. Or, like those who cooperated with Woodward and Bernstein during Watergate, were they told they had to protect themselves by giving "their side" of the story? (But protect themselves from what? And what story?)

They surely could not have believed that, like "Deep Throat," they were performing a public service. They could "finger" no crooks and they revealed no great scandals—none, that is, involving the Justices. Indeed, the book they made possible tells us nothing about the Court or the Justices that students of the Court did not already know or suspect, nothing other than the petty details: the depth of Brennan's contempt for Burger, the breadth of the discord among the Justices sitting during this period, and the lengths to which Douglas was willing to go in order to avoid resigning and, even after resigning, before withdrawing from active participation in the Court's business.

Could they have thought it important that the public know that they, the clerks, are not mere clerks? That their work is not confined to digging out citations or writing memoranda or drafts of opinions, but that they, especially those employed by some of the Justices, sometimes write the actual opinions? Or that they are held in such confidence by their Justices that they are allowed to join in the little plots against other Justices?

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That in at least one case—involving an involuntary confinement in a state mental institution—they were able to turn a decision against a petitioner into one in his favor? If so, are they proud of the deceit, fully retailed in these pages, which they employed to do it?

HAVING talked so freely with Woodward and Armstrong, and having been so generous with other people's private papers, is there any reason to believe they might not talk, or have not already talked, with others? We do know—at least Woodward and Armstrong tell us—that the clerks were regularly leaking information about pending cases to staff members in the Solicitor General's office (who told the Solicitor General who, in due course, informed the Chief Justice), and that they did this even during the Court's consideration of the *Pentagon Papers* case where the Solicitor General was attorney to one of the parties, that is, the United States. Would they also talk to their stockbrokers when, thanks to their privileged position, they had prior knowledge of the decision in, say, an antitrust case? Or to the foreign agents involved when the Court was reviewing a denial of a government application for a national-security wiretap?

It is unnecessary to multiply such examples because each of them would point to the same thing: the necessity of confidentiality. There was a time when we did take it for granted that the "best and the brightest" from the law schools would respect that necessity—another former clerk once wrote of the "remarkable" extent to which the Court takes the law clerks into its trust—but if Woodward and Armstrong are to be believed, we no longer can afford to do that, and some good might come from knowing it. With that in mind, I commend this book to the attention of one or another congressional committee.

It is apparent that the Court has been unable to discipline itself. When some clerks gave *Time* magazine prior knowledge of the decisions in the abortion cases, the Chief Justice threatened them with lie-detector tests; the clerks ac-

Lionel Trilling

CRITICISM AND POLITICS

William M. Chace

For fifty years Lionel Trilling was a major critical presence in America. "He believed passionately," wrote Irving Howe, "and taught a whole generation also to believe, in the power of literature—its power to transform, elevate, and damage." In this first comprehensive study of Trilling's criticism and fiction, Professor Chace demonstrates the range of Trilling's influence and examines his part in America's search for a sense of its cultural self. "Reading Chace is rather like reading Trilling's essays for the first time: one experiences the same sense of a sinuous, resourceful mind at work upon concerns which are as central to our age as they are delicate, elusive, and resistant to simple formulation. Chace has dramatized for us a subtle mind in complex and continuous confrontation with itself, a task requiring considerable literary as well as critical gifts." —*Thomas Flanagan*. "A fine study, lucid and gracefully written, of one of the two or three critics in mid-century America that mattered the most." —*M. H. Abrams*. \$12.95

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cused *him* of conducting a "witch-hunt," and nothing came of it. When the Court reached tentative decisions in the 1972 death-penalty cases, Burger asked the other Justices not to circulate the draft opinions and not to discuss them with their clerks. Brennan promptly did so, and Marshall, "with casual glee," we are told, "lost little time violating Burger's secrecy mandate." Burger was no more successful in the *Pentagon Papers* case: "Unwilling to abide by the Chief's restrictions that all the material be kept in the conference room, protected by Pentagon security guards stationed outside, Douglas ["the greatest living jurist"] took the material to his chambers and raised no objection when his clerks read the exhibits." A pretty example of "character and fitness" he set for his subordinates. When the Court was about to begin its consideration of the Watergate-tapes case, the Chief Justice took the extraordinary step of warning the clerks not to talk to anyone about it. "Marshall missed the session, but later got a full report from his clerks. The Chief had made an ass of himself again, Marshall concluded. The clerks told him that the Chief had put an absolute gag on all conversation with anyone [but Marshall] told his clerks it was up to each to decide whether to discuss the case with his wife." Of course, we have no way of knowing whether any of this is true—we have only Woodward and Armstrong's word for it, and they cite no sources—but surely we have an interest in learning whether it is true.

WHAT does bear "the indubitable testimonies of its own authenticity," if I may quote Lincoln in so sordid a context, is the term-by-term account of the way the Court makes its judgments in major, and nominally constitutional, cases. Woodward and Armstrong's account confirms the impressions gained from a study of the published opinions: the holdings are not derived from constitutional principles; the principles are "developed" or "created" in order to justify the holdings. Thus, we are told, Stewart saw abortion as "one

reasonable solution to population control," and Brennan helped Blackmun (who wrote the majority opinion in the cases) "develop a constitutional grounding for a right to abortion." This "grounding" proved to be a right to privacy that Blackmun discovered in the Ninth Amendment or in the Fourteenth, and like that character in *Iolanthe*, he didn't care which. (Eight years earlier, Douglas, also writing for the majority, found his right to privacy in "penumbras, formed by emanations" from the First, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Ninth, and Fourteenth Amendments.) To put it briefly, the Justices create their constitution and use the other one only to berate each other.

Instead of seeing themselves as the "faithful guardians" of the Constitution, the role assigned them by the Founders, these Justices see themselves as politicians with constituencies, chosen, as one might expect, according to the prevailing fashions. In its naiveté, Congress may think it necessary to propose a constitutional amendment in order to insure women their equal rights; not Brennan. "There is no reason to wait several years for the states to ratify the amendment"; if only Warren and Fortas had still been on the Court, he could have had a majority for his "landmark" opinion. And so it goes.

At one point, Woodward and Armstrong offer this observation: the Court's strength, they say, "derived from the public belief that the Court was trustworthy, a non-political deliberative body." What provoked this observation was a threat by Douglas to publish a scathing dissent (one that would "undermine the Court's credibility") if the majority voted to hold over the abortion cases for reargument. Even Brennan, Marshall, and Stewart, sympathetic to his views, were aghast, we are told. "The Chief might be a scoundrel," they are alleged to have said, "but making public the Court's inner machinations was a form of treason." So say our authors in the course of making them public.

STUDENTS of the Court have known

for some time that it has assumed the role as legislature for the nation, and, as this book reveals, it has done so willfully and knowingly. Such a role was forthrightly defended a few years ago in a *Harvard Law Review* article in which Professor Abram Chayes contended, among other things, that it is a waste of time for scholars to try to define "what the precise scope of judicial activity ought to be"; that little respect is owed to the principle of the separation of powers; that their very insulation from "narrow political pressures" makes the Justices uniquely qualified to decide public-policy questions; that, while the decisions in these cases affect vast publics, there need be no concern about the extent to which these publics are in fact represented in litigation—that the courts are as representative as the Congress; and that, when it comes right down to it, "one may ask whether democratic theory really requires deference to majoritarian outcomes whose victims are prisoners, inmates of mental institutions, and ghetto dwellers."

In short, and never mind what the Constitution may have to say on the subject, judges, and especially those at the top, are best qualified to govern us. They know what justice is—they have had the incomparable advantage of a law-school education—and we are lucky that they have become less and less inclined to allow constitutional scruples to inhibit them when they are given the chance to impose it on us. True, they are not subject to the control of the electoral process, and the Founders deliberately exempted them from the system of control that Madison described as ambition counteracting ambition, but no matter: federal judges, according to Chayes, are governed by "professional traditions of conduct and performance," as well as by "the accepted, often tacit, canons and leeways of office."

To Woodward and Armstrong and to their anonymous collaborators we owe something at least. However inadvertently, they have told us something we ought to know about these "professional traditions" and "canons and leeways of office."

Modernity & Modernism

PROPHETS WITHOUT HONOUR: A BACKGROUND TO FREUD, KAFKA, EINSTEIN, AND THEIR WORLD. By FREDERIC V. GRUNFELD. *Holt, Rinehart & Winston*. 349 pp. \$15.00.

FIN-DE-SIÈCLE VIENNA: POLITICS AND CULTURE. By CARL E. SCHORSKE. *Knopf*. 378 pp. \$15.95.

Reviewed by ROBERT ALTER

THERE is a certain amount of topical overlap between these two fine volumes of historical portraiture, but each has a very different story to tell. Carl Schorske maintains a steady, sharp focus on Viennese culture in the last decade of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th, succinctly sketching in necessary background for the immediately preceding era, making no attempt to investigate what was to follow his chosen period. He is not particularly concerned with the role of Jews in Viennese life, but given the cultural sociology of his subject, several of the major figures he discusses in detail—Schnitzler, Freud, Herzl, Schoenberg—are Jews, and he treats their Jewishness sensibly.

Frederic Grunfeld, by contrast, extends his narrative through the entire German-speaking world over the first few decades of this century, with special attention to the 20's and 30's, when most of the intellectuals subsequently exiled or murdered by the Nazis were at the peak of their activity. He concentrates entirely on writers, thinkers, and composers who were at least nominally or originally Jews; and he approaches his biographical subjects in a frankly elegiac mood, while Schorske rigorously prevents the grimness of later events from overshadowing the historical moment he is illuminating. Grunfeld deals at length with a few figures from Schorske's Vienna, devoting sections to Freud, Schoenberg, and

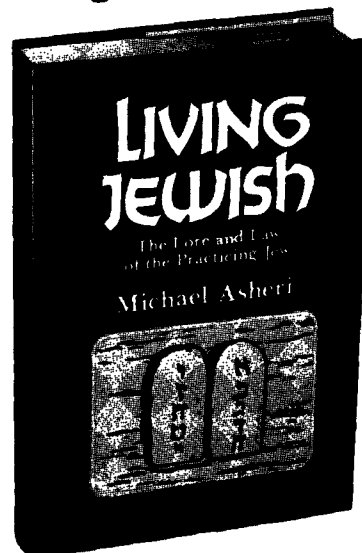
Mahler, but, significantly, not to Herzl; for he is interested specifically in the contribution of Jews to German culture, not in what they may have culled from their German surroundings for a Jewish renewal. In any case, though he does not ignore Vienna and also includes Kafka's Prague, Berlin is the main arena of his story.

Prophets Without Honour instructively demonstrates that it is possible to write a very good book without a controlling thesis, or, indeed, without anything very new to say about one's subject. Grunfeld, a free-lance critic of the arts and an independent researcher, is not a professional historian, and by and large he ignores what professional historians have written on the topics he discusses (neither Schorske nor Peter Gay, for example, is so much as mentioned here). What he has done admirably is to master all

the primary documents for his German Jewish life-studies—not only the many volumes of novels, stories, essays, poems, and plays, but also vast quantities of published memoirs, journals, correspondence, as well as the German periodical literature of the age. One comes to trust Grunfeld's nuanced and detailed knowledge of his materials, and this, together with his cultivated taste, his common sense, his range of moral sympathy, and his apt writing, produces a compelling evocation of high culture in the German Jewish world.

THE limitations of Grunfeld's study are most evident in the chapters on the more familiar figures. Any reader who knows very much about Freud, Kafka, Walter Benjamin, Hermann Broch, Else Lasker-Schüler is not likely to find further insight here. Grunfeld's virtue is in

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ROBERT ALTER, a contributing editor of *COMMENTARY*, is professor of Hebrew and Comparative Literature at Berkeley. His most recent book is *A Lion for Love: A Critical Biography of Stendhal*.

having retold the well-known stories so well, and in having joined them with arresting accounts of other figures in every sense untranslated from the German sphere, like the experimental novelist, Alfred Doeblin; the café poet, Erich Mühsam; the satiric playwright, Carl Sternheim; the essayist and philosopher, Theodor Lessing.

Grunfeld's human panorama includes pacifists, anarchists, socialists, liberals, agnostics, converts to Catholicism, radical assimilationists, post-traditional Jewish mystics. The attempt he makes in his introductory chapter to see in them all a "family resemblance" defined by the restless energy they exhibited is not particularly convincing, or at any rate is hardly informative. The terms, however, in which Grunfeld evokes this driven quality reveal the real ground of unity of his study: "The breathlessness of the long-distance runner is a theme that runs as a sinister leitmotiv in German Jewish history—as though they knew from the first that they had so little time." The historical hindsight of the last clause is precisely what gives *Prophets Without Honour* its special poignancy. All that ultimately unites the disparate figures discussed is that in the end they shared the same historical fate. Various, even incommensurable exponents of an extraordinary cultural flowering in the German language, they were all expunged from the German world, tortured, murdered, driven to madness or suicide, exiled to the far corners of the earth. Grunfeld's book is essentially a series of vivid illustrations of a harsh truth compressed in an aphorism by Salomo Friedländer, which he duly quotes in his text: "Any damned fool can put a bullet through the most brilliant brain."

Making no judgment on the so-called adventure of assimilation, Grunfeld recounts these exemplary lives—for he sees his subjects as secular saints in the integrity of their devotion to their cultural calling—with reverent affection. His book, then, though built out of solid historical matter, is finally more a monument to the dead than an act of historical inquiry.

CARL SCHORSKE, on the other hand, is a professional historian seeking to understand the multifarious connections between two essential phenomena in turn-of-the-century Vienna: the catastrophic breakdown of liberalism and the sudden explosion of modernism in literature and the arts. We have all become so accustomed to sweeping generalizations about both modernism and the German-speaking world that it is altogether bracing to be instructed by Schorske's assured sense of what, after all, distinguished this particular place and moment.

IT HAS been argued (by Roland Barthes, among others) that, elsewhere in Europe, the aborted revolutions of 1848 irrevocably confirmed the artist's sense of alienation from his society, drove him into a desperate cult of art, as in the paradigmatic instance of Flaubert. But in Austria, the growing political power of the middle classes after 1860, with the concomitant ascendancy of liberalism, led to a celebration of the arts as the supreme endorsement of a newly self-confident bourgeoisie:

Art was closely bound up with social status, especially in Austria, where the representational arts—music, theater, and architecture—were central to the tradition of a Catholic aristocracy. If entry into the aristocracy of the genealogical table was barred to most, the aristocracy of the spirit was open to the eager, the able, and the willing.

Though it is not a point Schorske himself stresses, one might add that the eager, the able, and the willing very often turned out to be Jews, "the supra-national people of the multinational state, the one folk which, in effect, stepped into the shoes of the earlier aristocracy," and whose "fortunes rose and fell with those of the liberal, cosmopolitan state."

By 1897, when the nationalist Christian Social party, under the leadership of the anti-Semite Karl Lueger, won the Viennese municipal elections, the fortunes of liberalism had plummeted beyond hope of recovery: an intolerant, irration-

alist, nativist "politics in a new key" seized control of civic life, pointing ominously toward a future of brownshirts and jackboots.

Now, there are two peculiar features of this fateful collapse of Austrian liberalism; one is underscored by Schorske, the other is implicit in the enterprise of most of the writers, artists, and composers he studies. What he repeatedly stresses is that the impotence and isolation of the Austrian artist, in contrast to the predicament of his counterpart elsewhere, were conditions shared with the class from which the artist sprang, the bourgeoisie: "Neither *dégage* nor *engagé*, the Austrian aesthetes [of the movement that emerged in the 1890's] were alienated not from their class, but with it from a society that defeated its expectations and rejected its values." This helps explain why the Viennese bourgeoisie, far from being a monolithic adversary to innovation in the arts as the general stereotype would have it, often provided the understanding patrons and the enthusiastic audiences for modernism.

THE other notable aspect of the crisis of liberalism that emerges from Schorske's portrait of the arts in Vienna is the degree to which the high priests of modernism, even as they recoiled from the uncouth voice of the rabble that spoke through the "politics in a new key," embodied in their own endeavor an irrationalism uncannily in tune with the forces impelling the new politics. Freud, of course, gave the irrational unprecedented weight as the subject for conscious inquiry, while inventing, as Schorske shrewdly argues, a comprehensive intellectual strategy for neutralizing politics, a realm that had bitterly failed him, by insisting on the primacy of infantile experience in determining all behavior. Klimt, Hofmannsthal, Schnitzler, Mahler, Kokoschka, and Schoenberg discovered various means for shattering the frames in which bourgeois culture had neatly contained the art-work; for assaulting the comfortable sense of a realm of autonomous beauty without harsh, disruptive truth; for giving vent through art to the darker impulses

of a hitherto repressed self. It was, as Schorske observes in a telling phrase, "a humanism unfamiliarly mixed with nihilism."

At first glance, this may look like the old argument about a subterranean link between modernism and fascism (one thinks, for example, of Erich Heller's critique of the Nietzschean strain in Yeats), but it seems to me that Schorske is suggesting something subtler and more complicated. The Viennese modernists did not embrace nihilism but rather humanism with an admixture of nihilism. Members of a disenfranchised class, they never absolutely renounced the liberal values that had sustained their class, but they contended inwardly with chaotic forces that were beyond the ken of liberal ideology and excluded from bourgeois social norms. In the streets of Vienna and in its municipal offices, much the same forces, cunningly channeled by the new populist leaders, were launching 20th-century politics under the menacing signs of reactionary nationalism. It is one thing, however, to tap the irrational as a motor force for mass movements, and quite another to confront it consciously or intuitively, to discover its weight and meaning by re-fashioning it as art. Schorske, avoiding Marxist simplifications and using psychoanalytic categories with discretion, succeeds in showing the intricacy of the relations between art and class, art and politics in the generative center of modernism.

Prophets Without Honour, a book that celebrates the preciousness of a distinctive culture cut off in its prime, necessarily suggests an abyss that separates us from the vanished past. *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, concentrating on the specific texture of one segment of the past, on its pastness, has the paradoxical effect of leading us to ponder the connections between that historical moment and our own. Living as we do in an age when art remains in the thrall of modernism, struggling to outdo it, undo it, or parodistically redo it, and when the viability of liberalism is globally threatened, we might well try to understand, as Schorske's book invites us to do,

the ramified meanings of the Viennese experience.

There was a dramatic urgency, a desperate excitement, that distinguished the modernist breakthrough from earlier revolutions in the arts, including even the Romantic one, and that gave it what has continued to seem a unique claim to authenticity. But Schorske demonstrates how, at least in Vienna, a necessary condition for all that urgency was a sense of radical impotence engendered by the failure of rational politics. The brilliance of modernism, then, flares out ambiguously against a background of political breakdown with which it may have covert affinities. In the aftermath of modernism, which is our own cultural fate, it is the aspect of breakdown that seems more clearly revealed in a self-directed art often withdrawn from meaningful connection with the troubling realm of history.

Minding the Store

MERCHANT PRINCES: AN INTIMATE HISTORY OF JEWISH FAMILIES WHO BUILT GREAT DEPARTMENT STORES. By LEON HARRIS. *Harper & Row*. 411 pp. \$12.95.

Reviewed by JONATHAN D. SARNA

TWELVE years have passed since Stephen Birmingham rocketed to the top of the best-seller list with his rousing account of the German Jewish elite. "*Our Crowd*" inaugurated a new literary subcategory: stranger-than-fiction tales of American Jews who rose to eminence. "Jealousies, tensions, snobberies,

JONATHAN D. SARNA, a new contributor, is *Rapoport Fellow at the American Jewish Archives*. His *Jacksonian Jew: The Two Worlds of Mordecai Noah* will be published in the spring by *Holmes & Meier*.



GERMANY AND THE UNITED STATES A "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP"?

Hans W. Gatzke

In this first modern overview of German history and Germany's constantly shifting relationships with her neighbors and the United States, Gatzke renders fresh judgments about Germany's unification under Bismarck, the "war guilt" question, Weimar, Hitler's reign, West Germany's democratization, and East Germany's dependency.

He also examines Germany's "special relationship" with the United States and clarifies prospects for the future.

American Foreign Policy Library \$17.50

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Photo Credit: Culver Pictures, Inc., The Bettman Archive.



courtships, social disciplines, griefs, and absurdities"—to Birmingham, these were the factors that mattered. A number of successors have by now followed in his footsteps, each in turn claiming to have produced a book even better than the original model. The most recent, which boasts of being "'Our Crowd' on a national scale," is Leon Harris's *Merchant Princes*, subtitled "An Intimate History of Jewish Families Who Built Great Department Stores."

Although Harris includes in his "intimate history" some material on his own family of Texas merchants, most of *Merchant Princes* is devoted to the famous: the Kaufmanns, the Goldwaters, the Goldsmiths, the Riches (notice how many Jewish merchants bear appropriate names), the Strauses, the Filenes, the Gimbels, the Marcuses, and the Rosenwalds. Each of these families, in its own way, was innovative. Each could point to a patriarch whose arduous labors spun peddlers' rags into glittering gold. Each, while proud of its Jewish heritage, refused to be bound by it. In the end, each lost control of its empire, and watched helplessly as its stores were federated into larger and larger conglomerates.

HARRIS, in keeping with the rules of his genre, is short on whys and long on whats. He paints endlessly fascinating portraits of princes and princesses "moved by greed as well as generosity, by lechery as well as love." His lively vignettes are well chosen; his picturesque descriptions authentic; his scandalous revelations delicious. *Merchant Princes*, like "*Our Crowd*," is great fun to read.

Is every story true?

Throughout this book I have been much more interested in the revealing and probable anecdote than in tiresome facts of unquestionable accuracy. I willingly confess my feeling, as expressed by the Abbé Raynal about Benjamin Franklin, that he would rather recount some men's stories than other men's truths.

Harris is too modest. Unlike Stephen Birmingham, he has footnoted most of his anecdotes, and

the few doubtful stories are not worth bothering to check. Does it really matter whether Morton E. Snellenburg did or did not keep nickel cigars in his front pocket to offer friends, and fine Havanas in an inside pocket for himself? If he didn't, somebody else did.

Harris is more, however, than an old-fashioned muckraker. He knows that the contributions of American Jewish merchants to the national life far exceed the sum of their scandals (though scandals there were aplenty). The great department stores and mail-order houses united Americans, made them more equal, and held out to everyone the dream of a better tomorrow. Nor were the profits generated by these massive palaces of merchandise simply squandered on sex and self-indulgence. Philanthropic merchants patronized culture, and allocated millions for charities of all kinds.

YET it is not the desire to do good that Harris sees as the motivation behind America's Jewish merchants—nor is it money, or sex, or even the goal of acceptance in Christian society. Instead, he says, the secret lay in the fun of it, "the one thing they shared despite all the talk of hard work and sacrifice." Sales were fun; competition was fun; publicity was fun. Everything, indeed, was so much fun that one wonders why the third and fourth generations dropped out to enter the professions. Could it possibly be that "fun" was more rationalization than motivation?

Harris is a great deal more perceptive in the fascinating asides which he sprinkles throughout *Merchant Princes*. A glimpse into Billie Scheible's elite whorehouse, for example, reveals that Jews frequented the place for reasons that went beyond variegated sex and "the delightful company of women." Brothels, it turns out, "were in fact clubs where the rich, Gentile and Jew together, and those not rich but powerful . . . met in a climate of easy conviviality"—this, at a time when most aboveboard elite social clubs slammed the door in the face of Jews, Negroes, and dogs. Did brothels serve as underground salons,

where men who could not publicly be seen together met and conversed? Did department stores serve the same function?

THE link between department stores and sex is not quite so far-fetched as it may seem. In other asides, Harris compares the process of merchandising to the act of seduction, and suggests that department stores served as surrogate husbands for rich, middle-aged women whose spouses ignored them, and whose children had left home: "Neiman-Marcus offered a blessed balm that combined cossetting, concern, flattery, and attention." Interestingly, another "Jewish" invention, psychoanalysis, served roughly the same function. In both cases, the prices charged for the therapy were extravagantly high. Nevertheless—or perhaps consequently—patients proved thoroughly satisfied.

For a woman who was less well-heeled, department stores served a different function: employment. Merchandising was one of the few professions in which a woman could rise—at least to the level of buyer. Only the theater offered greater independence, and then only at the price of reputation. Department stores, of course, did not lack their scandals. With so many men in positions of authority, scandal was inevitable. But outwardly, at least, the stores maintained a veneer of respectability. They provided many an immigrant girl with the funds necessary to support her family.

Merchant Princes might have devoted more attention to immigrant workers. It might also have widened its lens to offer a broader view of how a department store operated—or did not operate. Harris, however, specifically restricts his focus to "storekeepers and their families." Though qualified to deal with all facets of merchandising, he hesitates to break from the "*Our Crowd*" mold.

ONE wonders why the Birmingham model has proved so enduringly successful. When "*Our Crowd*" appeared, Marshall Sklare suggested in a review in COMMENTARY that the interest generated by the book was "in large part a consequence of

the fact that while Jews are not thought to be 'legitimate' they are not yet considered to be quite like everyone else; their being 'different' makes their story that much more intriguing." Twelve years and a shelf full of books later, a further possibility suggests itself: nostalgia for a world gone by.

Immigrant Jews personified in the best possible way the American dream of rags to riches. They provided living proof that the dream could come true. Now, with more and more people experiencing downward mobility, there is a natural fascination with early successful pioneers. An equally natural, if masochistic, interest attaches to the failures, the children who unmade the dream and brought about its decay.

The Jewish experience, as recounted in *"Our Crowd"* and its imitators, embodies an American morality play writ small. The curtain goes up on the noble, iron-willed generation of immigrant builders. It descends on the weak, powerless, and morally debauched generations of children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. In our day, we have witnessed Horatio Alger played back in reverse. The illustrious merchant princes are dead. In their place, as Leon Harris correctly observes, lies "the long famous Jewish malaise, the once-thought-to-be-atavistic sense of exile and alienation."

Ideologue of the New Class

ANNALS OF AN ABIDING LIBERAL.
By JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH.
Houghton Mifflin. 384 pp. \$12.95.

Reviewed by ARCH PUDDINGTON

ALTHOUGH John Kenneth Galbraith is best known for his books and articles on economics, he has also played an important role, both as writer and activist, in the promotion of political ideas, causes, and candidates. As the title of this collection of essays, reviews, and travel pieces suggests, Galbraith continues to regard himself as a

liberal at a time when many think liberalism to be in decline, both politically and intellectually. Galbraith certainly is aware of the widespread perception of conservative momentum and liberal retreat. He strongly disagrees with this perception; one of the principal aims of *Annals of an Abiding Liberal* is to debunk what Galbraith calls the

"conservative majority syndrome," the notion, recurring at regular intervals during the past decade or so, that "conservatism is the wave of the American future."

It is fitting that Galbraith should take up this challenge, since he is responsible for conceiving or popularizing many of the more controversial liberal policies and ideas.

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James M. Buchanan is University Distinguished Professor and General Director of the Center for Study of Public Choice, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. As a founder of the burgeoning subdiscipline of public choice, and as a public finance theorist and father of a modern school of public finance, Buchanan's work has had worldwide recognition.

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ARCH PUDDINGTON is executive director of the League for Industrial Democracy and the editor of *New America*.

Galbraith, in fact, has probably exerted more intellectual influence than any other person on those liberals who preferred McCarthy over Johnson, McGovern over Humphrey, and Udall over Carter. This is true even though on a number of issues, particularly those more directly connected with economic policy, his views run against liberal and socialist theories which blame modern corporations, especially the multinationals, for the world's economic difficulties, and pose various forms of decentralized, "participatory" socialism as an alternative to capitalism. Galbraith believes that inflation can be brought under control through rigorously enforced, permanent wage-price controls. He thinks breaking up the largest corporations through antitrust action to be economically unsound. He is favorably disposed toward multinational enterprises, and unenthusiastic about codetermination and other models of industrial power-sharing.

But on other issues, especially those relating to social policy, foreign affairs, and election strategy, Galbraith clearly shares the attitudes and objectives of the Democratic party's McGovernite wing. Even before affirmative action had become an issue of emotional contention, Galbraith was calling for racial and sexual quotas in university admissions and corporate hiring. He supported the McGovern-Fraser party-rules changes; here, typically, Galbraith eschewed rhetoric about "participation" and "openness," declaring bluntly that the new "reform" forces who would be assisted by the guidelines were more enlightened and deserving of power than the party professionals and labor leaders who would be supplanted. Along similar lines, Galbraith once urged liberals to withhold support from any Democratic Congressman, no matter how humanitarian his record on domestic affairs might be, unless he was prepared to help bring the military "under firm political control." And despite his oft-stated contempt for the American labor movement, Galbraith served as a fund-raiser for self-styled rebel Ed Sadlowski during his unsuccessful campaign for the United Steelworkers presi-

dency, justifying this intrusion into internal union politics in part on the grounds that a Sadlowski triumph would produce changes in the Steelworkers' traditional anti-Communist foreign-policy orientation.

ALTHOUGH these and the other debates and controversies in which Galbraith has been involved address a wide range of political questions, they share a common characteristic insofar as they have served as cutting-edge issues of political struggle within the Democratic party. These are the issues which divided individuals, groups, and forces: blacks against Jews; anti-Communists against anti-anti-Communists; middle-class reformers against the unions. In these contests, Galbraith has assumed the role of intellectual "point man" for what some call the New Class or New Politics movement, but which he prefers to describe as the "educational and scientific estate." Many of his writings are devoted to building a case for both the inevitability and desirability of this grouping's dominance in government and economic affairs.

As ideologue of the educational and scientific estate, Galbraith is often willing to assert opinions which the estate's rank-and-file draw back from for fear of being called irresponsible or elitist. (Others might go through contortions attempting to define the difference between goals and quotas; Galbraith comes right out for the enforcement of quotas throughout society.) Indeed, although the word "elitist" has suffered from overuse in the past few years, for Galbraith the label is entirely appropriate. Elitist sentiment oozes from his account of a 'round-the-world tour, replete with observations on the fine food, excellent conversation, beautiful and interesting women, and sumptuous accommodations which made the journey an altogether memorable one. Although Galbraith derives great enjoyment from mocking the "rich and powerful" (probably the most recurrent phrase in the book), he himself has acquired a strong taste for a style of life that comes only with wealth and high influence.

More disturbing in this regard is his benign view of totalitarian societies, and their effect on individual men and women. Galbraith is a leading proponent of the "convergence" theory—the idea that the differences between Communist and Western democratic societies are steadily diminishing through a process of economic interdependence. Galbraith maintains a certain ambiguity, one suspects purposely, as to whether Communist-capitalist convergence constitutes a narrow phenomenon of raw economics, or applies as well to political and civil rights. Whatever the case, life inside Communist society, for Galbraith, may not be as free or pleasant as we in the West are accustomed to, but then it's not all that bad either. Visiting Berlin, Galbraith climbs atop the Wall. "The Wall is, indeed, an insulting thing," he tells us.

But it is also . . . a monument to the errors of experts in foreign policy. All thought it a prelude to a deeper, sharper, more dangerous conflict in and over Berlin than ever before. There has been no further crisis since.

Later, Galbraith is driven through East Berlin, where he is

reassured to be reminded how close we and the Communists agree on our indices of achievement. The young East Berliners were indistinguishable from the young across the Wall. Both sexes wore the same abused jeans, had hair of the same length. In one pack of adolescents near Alexanderplatz were two who had "Dartmouth" on their T-shirts.

The hair styles and attire of these young people do not, of course, reflect a coming together of two societies, but the enthusiasm of the young in an authoritarian society for the popular culture of a democratic one. And if Galbraith had taken the time to speak to the youths loitering around Alexanderplatz, he might have discovered that they regard the Wall as something more than an insult, and that democratic rights ranked high on their index of society's success.

THE absence of Western liberties endured by the unfortunate inhabi-

tants of East Berlin pales before the tragic circumstances of the peoples of Southeast Asia. But even here Galbraith remains oblivious to the human tragedy that always seems to follow in Communism's wake. During his 'round-the-world tour, Galbraith visits Bangkok, where, as in the other cities on his itinerary, he attends meetings with political leaders, journalists, academics, and policy-makers. Yet if we are to believe Galbraith's account, the events in Indochina since the fall of Saigon, momentous events for Thailand, were hardly discussed at all. Galbraith does offer a personal observation, reflecting with satisfaction that the dominoes—Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore—have not been toppled by the Communists. He adds that the "strategic theorists who gave us the domino doctrine . . . took for granted that the Communist example would be persuasive," a remark that is characteristic of the misrepresentations which run through Galbraith's writings about Communism. Persuasion, after all, was never the issue; the issue was Vietnam's willingness to use its military might. Certainly the fears expressed then have been little allayed by Vietnam's subsequent conduct in Laos and Cambodia.

Aside from this, we get nothing at all about Indochina: the flight of the boat people, Cambodian genocide, Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia are ignored, even though at the time of Galbraith's Thailand visit, October 1978, Thai refugee camps were bulging with Cambodians fleeing both Pol Pot and the invading Vietnamese, Pol Pot's butchery was drawing the fire of Senator McGovern, and the expulsion of the boat people was well under way. This rather incredible omission is no doubt largely due to Galbraith's unwillingness to come to grips with his past view that life in a Vietnam run by the Communists would differ little for the average Vietnamese from life under what Galbraith once called the "repressive, obscene, and incompetent dictatorship" of General Thieu. But there is another, deeper issue at work here, and that is Galbraith's refusal to draw the obvious connection between the unprecedented

human misery in Indochina and the kind of social order, a Communist one, that its rulers are determined to forge at any price.

Galbraith himself believes that for the average person, democracy is preferable to authoritarianism, but he does not believe that the degree of difference between them is as great as those who cling to the "conventional wisdom" about Western society would have it. After all, he argues, repression and the manipulation of the masses through advertising is built into the industrial societies of the West; as he has written elsewhere, "in modern capitalism too there is an inherent conflict between organization with its discipline and the individual." Moreover, to insist stubbornly on pointing out the darker aspects of Communist society is to invite the Galbraith treatment of amused disdain. One never opposes Communism out of genuine revulsion against its systematic forms of oppression; one is rather a captive of a "global strategic" mindset, a craven apologist for the Pentagon, or a smug defender of the economic status quo in the capitalist world. Critical thought and anti-Communism do not coexist in Galbraith's world.

GALBRAITH believes that the Left faces two fundamental challenges in the immediate period ahead: the first is to devise a workable model for a new, publicly controlled structure of corporate governance; the second is to train a cadre of talented and forceful men and women to manage nationalized entities. He offers a blueprint for the public corporation of the future which would transfer authority from private boards of directors to new mechanisms to be dominated, not surprisingly, by the leading members of Galbraith's educational and scientific estate.

Galbraith's plan would eliminate private stockholders. The corporate board of directors would be replaced by a "board of public auditors," a majority of whose members would be appointed by the state, with the remainder coming from the upper ranks of management. Public members would be "men and women of strong

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public instinct" whose principal responsibility would be to insure that policies of the corporation served the public good. They would, for instance, assess the environmental impact of corporate decisions, determine whether corporate actions adhered to product safety regulations, and insure that the corporation maintained political neutrality. Galbraith emphasizes that the public director's role would be generally limited to oversight functions. "Management must retain the major powers of decisions and therewith the capacity to perform," he cautions, noting that uninformed meddling in management areas would have a detrimental impact on corporate achievement and, subsequently, on the public's faith in nationalized enterprise.

Specifically excluded from representation on the new public boards would be trade unionists, the one group which might be thought to have the most justified claim to a participant role in corporate management. The explanation is that union members would really not be affected by the policies set down by the public board since daily operation of the corporate entity would continue to lie within the province of management. One suspects, however, that Galbraith's dim opinion of codetermination-type arrangements is largely a manifestation of his overall view of trade unions as insufficiently enlightened to promote corporate conduct that conforms to the "public good." He would prefer to reserve the new places of corporate power for his educational and scientific estate, whose members would oversee the policies of the public corporation as well as handle the daily routine of management. Meanwhile, under the Galbraith model, the role of unions would be doubly diminished since collective bargaining, the foundation of trade-union strength in the U.S., would be handed over to the government officials who determine wage-price guidelines.

GALBRAITH acknowledges that the members of his enlightened estate are concerned about corporations because "that's where the power

is." But he seems to find it inconceivable that the estate might be moved by common material interests or entertain cultural values antithetical to the interests and values of the majority. And although other groups would have a voice in public affairs, Galbraith would redraw the rules so as to make that voice a relatively powerless one. In the meantime, members of the estate would reign supreme, setting wages and prices, determining economic priorities, reorienting foreign policy, setting down the rules of whom to hire and admit to universities.

Most people would object to the entrenchment of this technocratic hierarchy in society's commanding heights, just as the majority has in the past often rejected the ideas Galbraith put forth and the candidates he endorsed. Unfortunately, the educational and scientific estate has more than once demonstrated its ability to achieve its goals despite the expressed wishes of the majority—quotas and certain foreign-policy decisions being prime examples. Galbraith would have us believe that he speaks for people who have been unfairly and foolishly excluded from the machinery of power; in fact, Galbraith is the ideological spokesman for a class, or estate, which has a good deal of power, and wants much more.

The New Equality

COUNTING BY RACE: EQUALITY FROM THE FOUNDING FATHERS TO BAKKE AND WEBER. By TERRY EASTLAND AND WILLIAM J. BENNETT. *Basic Books*. 243 pp. \$10.95.
JUSTICE AND REVERSE DISCRIMINATION. By ALAN H. GOLDMAN. *Princeton University Press*. 251 pp. \$16.50.

Reviewed by
JAMES A. NUECHTERLEIN

FROM the earliest days of the nation, the moral meaning of America has been intimately associated with the idea of equality among individuals. The American

Dream promised that here, to a degree surpassed nowhere else, a man could advance as far as his ability, effort, and luck carried him, and that his horizons would not be artificially limited by attributes of ancestry, class, or religion. This American idea, while never perfectly or universally applied, nonetheless stood as the ideal which, to foreigners and natives alike, expressed America's special identity. Americans were meant to stand equal before the law and equal in their opportunity to compete for desired public goods; they were to be considered and accorded rights as individuals, not as members of racial, ethnic, or other groups.

That ideal is now under severe challenge, not, as one might expect, from reactionary sources, but from individuals and organizations considered by others and certainly by themselves as exponents of humane liberalism. It is among the most regrettable ironies of modern American history that the postwar civil-rights movement, perhaps the most majestic moral effort of the entire national experience, has in its latter days come to insist on programs of racial balance that amount, however disguised or rationalized, to the weighing of people's interests in the scales not of individual merit or right but of racial origin. Should the current civil-rights movement be successful in establishing its programs of reverse discrimination—and the United States Supreme Court has, in its *Bakke* and *Weber* decisions, gone some distance toward acknowledging the new equality—the moral basis of American society would be substantially and negatively altered. The disease is already spreading: the women's-rights movement has also come to argue that scarce public goods ought to be distributed, at least in part, on the basis of group (in this case sexual) identity.

These two very different books take issue with the new equality. Terry Eastland and William Bennett approach the issue as historians and social critics, while Alan Goldman writes as a professional philosopher. Neither of the books is, by itself, entirely satisfactory, but both have considerable merit

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and, taken together, they provide a persuasive defense of individual equal rights and a devastating attack on the moral obtuseness of the arguments behind group entitlement.

Eastland and Bennett, taking the *Bakke* decision as their point of departure, briefly trace the history of the idea of equality as applied to black-white relations from 1776 to the present. They demonstrate that Americans have normally understood the term to refer to the moral equality of individuals and not to statistical equality between groups. Moral equality requires equality of opportunity, but it might or might not result in equality of condition, or what the authors designate as "numerical equality." It is the moral equality embodied in the Declaration of Independence, Eastland and Bennett insist, that has served as the continuing inspiration of the American tradition of equality, and the idea of numerical equality which developed in the 1960's diverges from and contradicts that tradition.

It is an excellent notion to look at the historical meaning of American equality—surprisingly little has been written on the subject—but one wishes it had been better done. In the first place, the history is frequently so compressed and foreshortened (for example, the complex issue of congressional control of slavery in the territories from 1787 to 1857 is disposed of in three-and-a-half pages) as to baffle the non-expert and leave specialists quite unsatisfied. The authors would have had to write a much longer book properly to fulfill their laudable intentions. Then, too, they occasionally attempt to make their story too tidy. Most notably, they make the Abraham Lincoln who debated the issue of slavery in the territories with Stephen Douglas in 1858 a far more rigorous and unambivalent racial egalitarian than he in fact was. They avert their gaze from evidence, and there is a lot of it, that would complicate their portrait of Lincoln as a spokesman for racial equality.

Fortunately, however, Eastland and Bennett are far more persuasive as social critics than as historians. Their chapters on the fallacies of

numerical equality and on the *Bakke* and *Weber* cases are models of clear and effective exposition. The argument cannot here be reproduced, but it would be difficult to imagine a better brief analysis of the complex *Bakke* decision and of the public's understandably diverse and confused reaction to it. The authors show convincingly that the majority decision, which struck down precise quota systems for university admissions but which conceded that racial considerations may form one factor in admissions policy, constituted an instance not of judicial statesmanship but of moral and intellectual confusion. As the authors summarize, the Court, "in invalidating quotas but allowing counting by race, . . . made a distinction without a moral difference." To Justice Harry Blackmun's descent into profound nonsense—"in order to get beyond racism, we must first take account of race"—they contrast the late Alexander M. Bickel's simple and

wise conclusion that "discrimination on the basis of race is illegal, immoral, and unconstitutional, inherently wrong, and destructive of democratic society."

ALAN GOLDMAN comes at the problem of reverse discrimination quite differently from Eastland and Bennett, but arrives at very similar conclusions. His exercise in "applied social philosophy," operating from a contractarian moral framework similar in many respects to that of John Rawls, concludes that in school admissions, job hiring, or training-program policies, the most competent applicants for positions acquire *prima facie* rights to those positions. In reaching this judgment, Goldman appeals to the same principles of moral equality and equality of opportunity as do Eastland and Bennett.

Reverse-discrimination policies, Goldman goes on, cannot be justified when applied to individuals simply on the basis of membership

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in a group defined by race or sex. Preferential treatment, he suggests, is legitimate only when used to compensate particular victims of specific earlier violations of *prima facie* rights or to create equal opportunity in the future for the "chronically poor and socially deprived," those who have suffered "socially induced initial disadvantages."

Goldman argues that group entitlement, the basis for most present affirmative-action programs, not only does unacceptable injustice to those displaced (usually white males), it also provides benefits to those within minority groups least likely to have been victims of discrimination. Very few oppressed ghetto blacks, after all, ever get close to being eligible to apply for law or medical school. It simply is not true to say that all blacks—even less, all women—have been so damaged by discrimination that they deserve special consideration for scarce positions. Those who have been so damaged, Goldman insists, must be compensated, but the basis for that judgment should, in equity, be individual, and not simply a mark of color or gender.

Goldman's intellectual and moral rigor is welcome, and it serves as a useful antidote to the elegant sophistries of certain other writers, notably Ronald Dworkin, on the subject. Along the way, he adds further weight to the case against the *Bakke* decision's evasions. It is unlikely, however, that Goldman will be widely read, and part of the problem, at least, is his own. The book is unnecessarily heavy going: it expends excessive energy on weak or remote objections to its theses; it frequently bogs down in endless elaborations of its points; and it is heavily repetitious. It also includes a quite unnecessary and wholly unconvincing argument in favor of forced integra-

tion (as opposed to simple desegregation) of public schools. Finally, the argument for preferential treatment for the "chronically poor and socially deprived" is developed less satisfactorily than most of the other arguments, and is especially weak on suggestions as to how "socially induced initial disadvantages" might be overcome. (It should be noted in this connection, though, that Goldman improves on Rawls by affirming that individuals have the right to the benefits of initial natural, if not social, advantages.)

THESE books together remind us of certain fundamental issues in the debate over affirmative action that are nonetheless frequently overlooked. There is, in the first place, no such thing as a benign quota. Assuming a limited number of positions in medical schools, for example, it follows that for every person given preferential admission to such a position, another, presumably more qualified, individual is excluded, and that serves the interests neither of justice nor of public utility. People have the right to be judged for positions by relevant criteria only, and the public is best served by access to the finest medical talent available, of whatever color or sex. As for the presumed social utilities served by having higher percentages of women and minorities in certain positions, we need to remind ourselves, first, that many of these arguments are of questionable validity—do women students really learn better from women teachers? do heterogeneous law-school classrooms produce better lawyers?—and that, in any case, it goes against the grain of justice to sacrifice individual rights to anything less than absolutely compelling social need.

Much of the confusion in the public mind over government policy involving equal opportunity

follows from an incorrect definition of the public interest in the matter. The proper goal of public policy in a liberal society is not that groups be represented in certain positions in specified proportions, but that those positions be distributed according to relevant and nondiscriminatory rules. Who is to know what percentage of blacks or women would be doctors today had there been no discrimination in the past? The assumption that those percentages would match the percentages of those in other groups who enter medicine is entirely arbitrary. Recent studies of mobility among various ethnic groups in America show that there has been no convenient proportionality of occupational patterns, whether or not discrimination was present. The factors that enter into group occupational patterns are enormously complex and varied, and there is no good reason why government policy should assume any predetermined result.

Official government guidelines deny any intention of advocating reverse discrimination or of imposing quotas; they speak instead the euphemistic language of "goals" and of making "good-faith efforts" to overcome "underutilization" of women and minorities. Goldman cuts through to reality when he observes that "there appears to be little doubt that . . . goals have in practice been felt as . . . pressure [for reverse discrimination] by those with the authority to hire, and that reverse discrimination is the natural response to them." Few knowledgeable people would deny either that covert racial and sexual quotas operate in American schools and businesses or that they are the result of pressure from the government of the United States. That is the reality, and it involves nothing less than a betrayal of our oldest and best traditions.



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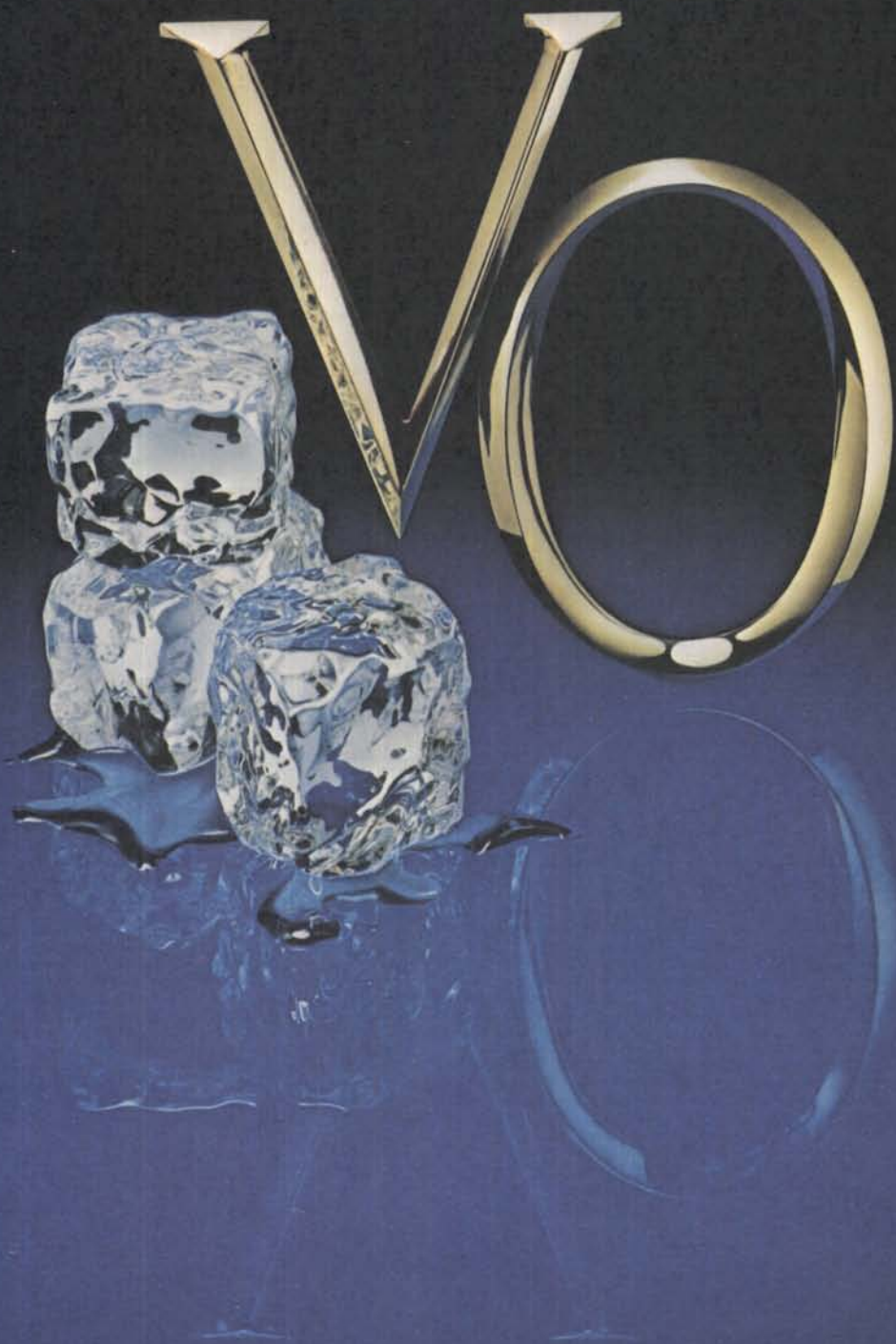
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